Information Needs Study

of

Alberta Farmers and Farm Families

Follow-up Qualitative Research

re:

Interpretations of Business Management and

Home Management/Family Relationships

Alberta
AGRICULTURE
Planning Secretariat

INFORMATION NEEDS STUDY

OF

ALBERTA FARMERS AND FARM FAMILIES

FOLLOW-UP QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

RE:

INTERPRETATIONS OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND

HOME MANAGEMENT/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

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Alberta Agriculture

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 1983, The Heffring Research Group, a Calgary-based consulting firm, conducted a study of the information needs of Alberta farmers and farm families. Through a province-wide telephone survey, the researchers found that business management and home management/family relationships were ranked by farm families as being most important in making day-to-day decisions in maintaining a viable farm unit.

As a follow up to Heffring's research, this project purposed to use qualitative research methods to obtain Alberta farm families' interpretations of the terms "business management" and "home management/family relationships". Information was also sought on their particular information needs with regard to business management and home management/family relationships, and on their preferred methods of obtaining this information. Since the opportunity presented itself, the respondents were also consulted on their perceptions on the incidence of farm domestic violence and whether the non-farming public has an appreciation of Alberta's agriculture industry.

Consultation with focus groups and interviews with farm families were the qualitative research techniques used in collecting the data. As in the 1983 study, the target respondents were farm families resident on producing farms in Alberta and both the focus groups and farm families were selected from within each of Alberta Agriculture's six regions. Farm owner's age, the length of time he/she had farmed, and type of business arrangement were additional variables used in selecting farm families for interviews. Graduates of the Agricultural Financial Management course offered at Lethbridge Community College were included in the research as a control group.

FINDINGS: HIGHLIGHTS

During the research, the participants quickly revealed they had no precise definition for "business management" and "home management/family relationships", and that these were strongly enmeshed in the complex technology of managing the farm business. Farm business management was

delineated as having four major interlinking and equally important components: finance, production, marketing and human resource (people). Given the complexity and breadth of the gathered information, a tabular classification system, based on these four components, was designed to measure management similarities/differences between the research groups. Examination of this tabulated data revealed extensive differences in interpretation of "business management" and "home management/family relationships". These differences were province wide. Therefore, it became apparent there is a great need to establish a standard mechanism to provide a common understanding among all parties involved in the business of agriculture.

With regard to the delivery of information programs, the majority of respondents desired topic-specific courses/workshops/seminars and information on the skill level required for maximum participation and learning in courses. They also said that the two most important factors in deciding whether or not to attend a course/workshop/seminar were instructor expertise in the course area and adequate advance notice of course content. They strongly stated their preference for more one-on-one consultations.

On the topic of farm domestic violence, the research participants reported personal knowledge of incidents of violence and stated the frequency of incidents is increasing. The respondents also perceived that non-farmers do not have a high degree of appreciation for the economic contributions of Alberta's agriculture industry to society's well being.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following summary highlights the major recommendations resulting from the study:

*Standardized programs to develop and strengthen the business management abilities of farm unit managers are urgently needed throughout the province. In line with its stated primary objective --to help Alberta's agricultural producers maintain economically

viable farm family business units--Alberta Agriculture should deliver a classified core program at the district level. Designing, implementing and promoting a standard, comprehensive province-wide program would foster a common basis of understanding between staff, producers and, by virtue of interaction, all others involved in the business of agriculture.

*More aggressive focus must be directed to the human (people) management component of the farm business, in particular, how to communicate effectively (spousal, nuclear/extended families, external contacts), how to resolve conflict/anger, time/stress management, how to make partnerships work.

*Consideration of realistic farm living expenditures must be taken into account in farm cash flow projections. Data on realistic farm living expenditures are negligible. To fill this gap, DHEs need to continue current studies on farm living expenses. If they have no records of their own, farm business units need this data to make management decisions.

*Staff/adult educators need to develop/expand awareness skills in how to hear and be heard, to recognize life cycle stages (personal, family, farm) to gain a greater understanding of the unique problems in family run businesses, to understand the dynamics of family violence and identify early warning signals to determine practical ways of reaching those who would most benefit from prevention programs.

*Required also are practical, not theoretical, specialists with global perspectives who can be easily contacted by farm families for information, particularly in marketing.

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FOLLOW-UP QUALITATIVE RESEARCH RE: INTERPRETATIONS OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND HOME MANAGEMENT/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

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BACKGROUND

In 1983, Alberta Agriculture contracted the Heffring Research Group Ltd. to conduct a province-wide telephone survey. The purpose of the survey was to provide data on the information needs of Alberta farmers and farm families. The investigation focussed on information farmers and farm families need to make day to day decisions on the farm; sources of information for primary producers and level of satisfaction with these; preferred methods of information delivery; and the kinds of information and services that are available from Alberta Agriculture but are not needed, and vice versa.

The target population for the telephone survey was all commercial farms in Alberta. A commercial farm was defined as a "producing farm with annual sales of agricultural products of at least $2,500 or more," the same definition used by Statistics Canada. Two thousand three hundred twenty-five (2,325) telephone interviews with farm operators or female heads of household (30 per cent quota) were completed, and the results were weighted to reflect the farm population of each of Alberta Agriculture's six regions.

In the telephone survey, all respondents were asked the following question:

> On a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being very important and 5 being not at all important, please indicate how important the following types of information are to the operation of your farm: [eight (8) information topics were read by the interviewer one at a time and the starting point was rotated with each call.]

The survey results to this question are reported in Table 1.

TABLE I. IMPORTANCE OF INFORMATION AREAS

	N=2325					No.	Av.
	1	2	3	4	5	Resp.	Score
Daily market information	28.9%	24.1%	26.8%	10.7%	9.1%	0.3%	2.5
Market forecasts	23.7	30.7	25.8	10.5	9.0	0.3	2.5
Livestock production technology	21.1	24.6	20.0	10.2	23.4	0.6	2.9
Crop production technology	33.1	34.6	18.5	7.0	6.1	0.7	2.2*
Selection and use of agricultural chemicals	42.0	28.6	13.1	6.9	8.9	0.5	2.1*
Business management	37.5	28.8	21.2	7.4	4.7	0.4	2.1*
Home management and family relationships	38.1	24.6	20.8	8.7	7.3	0.5	2.2*
Government policies	19.7	23.1	28.2	12.9	15.3	0.7	2.8

* Most important types of information

The respondents ranked four types of information as being most important for making viable day-to-day business decisions:

- Business management
- Selection and use of agricultural chemicals
- Home management and family relationships
- Crop production technology

PURPOSE OF THIS QUALITATIVE RESEARCH PROJECT

Since Alberta's primary producers ranked the above types of information as being very important to them, it was considered prudent to find out what they meant by "business management" and "home management and family relationships." For this purpose, this qualitative research proposal was designed and approval for action was received in July 1984. In turn, members of Alberta Agriculture's Management Committee and staff of the Field Services Sector were informed of this follow-up research to Heffring's Information Needs Study.

The primary and potential secondary outputs of this activity were expected to be:

Primary Outputs

1) Clarify expectations between supplier (Alberta Agriculture staff) and receiver (farmers and farm families).
2) Assist field staff in program planning and establishing program priorities (for example, criteria to use to make decisions, indicators showing need, etc.).

3) Assist in determining in-service training needs of professional staff to meet those identified program needs.

4) Assist in recruiting staff with the appropriate skills to meet these specific program needs.

5) Encourage use of program evaluation as a measure of accountability in meeting client-identified program needs.

Potential Secondary Outputs

1) Standardization of management terms for clearer, more precise communication between suppliers/receivers of management programs and services.

2) Key indicators showing how decisions are made on the farm (for example, against goals/objectives? expectations?).

3) Firsthand client suggestions vis-a-vis innovative financial methods for agricultural producers (in response to our Minister's concern).

4) Additional data to amplify client profiles generated by Heffring's Information Needs Study.

5) Attempt to clarify specific findings from Information Needs Study vis-a-vis livestock production technology and farm/field visits.

RESEARCH METHOD

Interviews with farm families on their home sites and use of focus groups were the qualitative research techniques employed. Qualitative research methods are gaining acceptance in research circles, their strength being that they provide natural, in context, 'slice of life' data, usually in the ordinary and everyday language of those who are

respondents. Focus groups are increasingly being used to give researchers an in-depth look at the thinking behind public opinion. That is, where direction rather than magnitude is required for decision making, focus group study provides viable information on the drift of the market. While it is argued that a small sample is not exactly representative of an entire population, it is acknowledged that it comes fairly close.

The target market for this follow-up research was the same as for the Information Needs Study--farm families resident on a producing farm in Alberta. The focus group participants were selected on the basis of age and location. It is widely believed that information needs of Alberta farm families differ from region to region. Though Heffring's Information Needs Study showed otherwise, it was considered prudent to repeat the regional approach for the follow-up research to substantiate Heffring's findings. Thus, the locations of the focus groups and the on-site interviews were within the boundaries of Alberta Agriculture's six regions.

The age categories were developed by using census data and by meshing theories from several studies. The four groupings used were:

- less than 35 years
- 35 - 44
- 45 - 54
- over 55

Table II provides census data on the Alberta farming population by each of the four age groupings.

TABLE II. AGE OF FARM OPERATOR BY ALBERTA AGRICULTURE REGIONS

REGIONS	1	2	3	4	5	6	PROVINCIAL
Age			(% of population)				
35 or Less	24.0	21.0	22.0	20.9	17.4	25.1	21.2
35 - 44	22.2	22.0	22.9	23.5	24.7	25.9	23.4
45 - 54	24.9	25.0	24.8	25.2	29.0	26.2	25.8
55+	29.0	32.2	30.3	30.5	28.9	23.0	28.9
# of Farms	8,513	7,952	11,455	9,999	11,898	8,239	58,506
% of Total Farms in Alberta	14.6	13.6	19.6	17.1	20.3	14.1 =	99.3%

Source: Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 1981.

The use of age to segment a population is an emerging practice with social researchers. Several studies have reinforced this approach as being reliable and relevant since applicable life cycle components can be predetermined.

Heffring divides the provincial and regional findings of the Information Needs Study into three age groups on the basis of their distinct information profiles. The Seasons of a Man's Life by Daniel Levinson divides age by stage of personal development. Of Time and the Enterprise by John Bennett meshes stages of personal development with stages in farm

family development. Financial Management in Agriculture by P.J. Barry, J.A. Hopkin and C.B. Baker talks of the interaction of the farm manager and the family in terms of the business cycle of the farm firm. Using age categories in this follow-up study is further reinforced by similar groupings in An American Council of Life Insurance Adult Financial Matrix. (Appendix A is a schematic diagram of the groupings used in these studies. Appendix B "Temporal Rhythms of Local Components -- A Typical Agrifamily System" and Appendix C "Meeting Goals by Stages, From School to Retirement" are two other examples where age is used as a segmentation factor.)

In selecting farm families to be interviewed on their home sites, factors additional to age and location were considered. These were:

- age 35 or less, farming 5 years or less
- age 35 or less, farming 5 - 10 years
- age 35 to 44, single owners
- age 35 to 44, partnership business arrangements
- age 45 to 54, single owners
- age 45 to 54, partnership business arrangements
- age 55+, single owners or partnership arrangements
- 1 A.D.C. client, referral from Vivianne Myles, Research Officer, A.D.C., Camrose.

Except for A.D.C., the selection of participants for the on-site interviews and the focus groups was done through contacts in each region. In the end, and unintentionally, the participating clients represented diverse agricultural enterprises with gross annual farm sales ranging between $50,000 to $250,000+.

In preparation for the interviews and focus group discussions, front end data on interpretations of business management and home management/family relationships were obtained through:

- a computer literature search (with little success in finding prior studies on the subject area).
- intensive review of two studies on management needs of commercial farmers (Illinois; Ontario).
- six regional meetings with Alberta Agriculture managers and relevant specialists.
- consultative interviews with:

  Credit Granting Agencies - 3

  Private Agriculture Consultants - 2

  Small Business Consultants - 2

  Rural Sociology (U. of A.) - 2

  R.E.D.A. - 1

  Alberta Agriculture Managers - 15

  A.D.C. - 1

- intensive discussion with (a) John Whitehead who developed and directs the farm financial management course offered at Lethbridge Community College and with (b) U. of A. Professor Len Bauer who directs the Farm Lab.

The questions posed during the on-site farm family interviews are provided in Appendix D. The responses were recorded in writing as the dialogue progressed. (The use of a tape recorder was shelved when field tests indicated the time required to transcribe the tapes would be excessive.)

Opportunely, the Alberta Women of Unifarm's annual conference occurred during the project's data gathering time period. In a strong show of cooperation, these farm women quickly volunteered to be interviewed. Using the interview factors as guidelines, eight interviewees were selected.

The questions posed to and discussed with the focus groups are shown in Appendix E. These discussions were taped and later transcribed. Despite the heavy time commitment required for transcription, this reporting technique was essential to capture the group's interaction without interruption. Additionally, each participant answered two questionnaires: one on specific management topics and demographics for analysis, the other on agriculture's image. As is the general custom in focus group discussion research, each participant was given a modest cash honorarium at the end of the session.

Four years ago, John Whitehead introduced, and still directs, a three-year "farm financial management" course at the Lethbridge Community College. Upon the author's request, he generously provided the names of graduates from his course. From this list, focus group participants were selected on the basis of age. These groups were important to the data gathering as they served as control groups in comparison to the farm families interviewed.

To sum up, the number of farm family interviews and focus group discussions that were completed are shown in Table III.

TABLE III. FARM FAMILY INTERVIEWS AND FOCUS DISCUSSSION GROUPS

Regions	1	2	3	4	5	6
Farm Families on site interviews	5 (1ADC)	8 (1ADC)	1 (1ADC)	6 (1ADC)	Nil	8 (1ADC)
Number of focus groups	6	3	3	Nil	Nil	4

Capitalizing on an unplanned opportunity and with the courteous support of the Farm Business Management Branch, a questionnaire was circulated to farm families attending the Managing Agricultural Technology for Profit (MATFP) Conference at Lake Louise in March 1985. The questionnaire was structured for purposes of comparisons with the findings from the interviews and focus groups. It is perceived that MATFP Conference attendees represent the progressive, successful farmers in the province. If so, their responses would reinforce the qualitative research findings, or reveal differences. Eighty-two (82) participants answered the questionnaire.

The final activity planned for this study was ratification of the qualitative research results through a province-wide survey and additional interviews. However, due to political sensitivities, these plans were not carried out.

It was a frustrating fall and winter. Early snow and extreme weather conditions necessitated much rescheduling. Coordination of the interviews and focus groups was most time consuming, exhausting, and required hundreds of phone calls. The delays eventually caused difficulties in getting participants to attend focus groups or have in-depth interviews since spring work had begun (e.g. calving time, preparation of equipment/seed for spring field work, etc.). Many farm families phoned in cancellations, at which point the project was discontinued. As a result, some interviews and focus groups were not completed as planned.[1]

A personal thank you letter and gift of appreciation (a 1985 calendar) was sent to each person who had participated in an interview or focus group. A summary report of the findings will be sent to each of them when it becomes available.

Overall, there was high positive support by the farm families for this follow-up project. Many stated it should continue on an on-going basis.

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1 In qualitative research, if information repeats itself after two discussion groups or interviews, the process can be halted as new information is seldom generated. This was indeed occurring in this project's activities, so no particular effort was made to fill the gaps.

FINDINGS

This section will be divided into five subject areas:

I. Interpretation of business management and home management/family relationships.

II. Most important information needs relative to (i) business management and (ii) home management/family relationships.

III. Preferred methods of obtaining information.

IV. Farm domestic violence.

V. Image of agriculture.

TABLE IV. - FREQUENCY RESPONSES BY INTERVIEWEES AND FOCUS GROUPS
Responses to the questions: "What Do You Mean by Business Management?", "Home Management/Family Relationships?"

BENCH MARK ITEMS/TITLES	GROUPS					
I. In the Production Component, they said it was:	EXTERNAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS	INTERNAL (A.D.A.) CONSULTANTS	INTERVIEWS ACROSS PROVINCE	FOCUS GROUPS ACROSS PROVINCE	JOHN WHITEHEAD'S GRADS	A.D.C. INTERVIEWS
(a) Decision Making Regarding: - variety of crops, livestock	X	X	#	X	●	#
- profitability of various enterprises & unit costing	¶	¶	¶	¶	●	¶
- what rations to feed	¶	#	¶	¶	#	¶
- fertilizers (kind/level) to apply	X	#	¶	X	●	X
- what machinery is needed and whether to buy, lease or custom hire	X	X	¶	¶	●	¶
- chemicals, pesticides & herbicides (types/usage)	X	X	X	X	●	#
(b) Weather Records/Forecasts	¶	¶	¶	¶	●	¶
(c) Livestock Nutrition	¶	X	¶	¶	●	¶
(d) Producing the Right Product	X	X	X	X	●	#

RATE OF FREQUENCY SYMBOLS: ● = 75%+ # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

BENCH MARK ITEMS/TITLES	EXTERNAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS	INTERNAL (A.D.A.) CONSULTANTS	INTERVIEWS ACROSS PROVINCE	FOCUS GROUPS ACROSS PROVINCE	JOHN WHITEHEAD'S GRADS	A.D.C. INTERVIEWS
(e) Computer Applications - Using Appropriate Software for Record Keeping	¶	¶	¶	X	#	¶
(f) Consultations with:						
i. Extension Agent	¶	¶	¶	¶	●	¶
ii. Farm Management Specialist	¶	¶	¶	¶	#	¶
iii. Producer Group(s), i.e. Commodity Groups, Suppliers	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶

RATE OF FREQUENCY SYMBOLS: ● = 75%+ # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

BENCH MARK ITEMS/TITLES	GROUPS					
II. In the Financial Component, they said it was:	EXTERNAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS	INTERNAL (A.D.A.) CONSULTANTS	INTERVIEWS ACROSS PROVINCE	FOCUS GROUPS ACROSS PROVINCE	JOHN WHITEHEAD'S GRADS	A.D.C. INTERVIEWS
(a) Bookkeeping i. Farm Office (operational)	¶	¶	¶	¶	#	¶
ii. Filing System (operational)	¶	X	¶	¶	¶	¶
iii. Equipment Records	X	X	¶	X	●	X
iv. Production Records	#	#	X	X	●	¶
v. Financial Records	●	●	#	#	●	●
vi. Inventory Records	X	X	¶	¶	¶	#
vii. Farm/Home Bank Account/s	¶	X	¶	¶	●	¶
viii. Bank Reconciliation/s	X	¶	¶	¶	●	¶
ix. Synoptic Journal/s	X	¶	¶	¶	#	¶
x. Payroll Records	X	¶	¶	¶	#	¶
xi. Accounting Records	X	¶	¶	¶	●	●
(b) Analyzing Financial Statements	●	●	X	X	¶	X

RATE OF FREQUENCY SYMBOLS: ● = 75%+ # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

BENCH MARK ITEMS/TITLES	EXTERNAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS	INTERNAL (A.D.A.) CONSULTANTS	INTERVIEWS ACROSS PROVINCE	FOCUS GROUPS ACROSS PROVINCE	JOHN WHITEHEAD'S GRADS	A.D.C. INTERVIEWS
xii. Manual Single/Double Entry Method	¶	¶	X	¶	¶	X
xiii. Preparing Balance Sheet/s	¶	¶	¶	X	#	¶
(c) Business Procedures - Bonding	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶
(d) Cash Management i. Which type? -- Buy, Lease or Crop Share	●	●	¶	X	●	●
ii. Types of Financing to Buy Machinery	●	●	#	X	●	#
iii. Forecasting Needs, Interest Rates, etc.	●	●	X	¶	●	●
iv. Surplus Funds	●	●	¶	¶	●	●
(e) Management of Working Capital (day-to-day, month-to-month)	●	●	#	#	#	●
(f) Management of Term Capital	●	#	#	#	#	●
(g) Income Tax Management - Including Estate Planning	●	●	●	#	#	X
(h) Insurance Management	X	¶	¶	X	#	¶

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BENCH MARK ITEMS/TITLES	EXTERNAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS	INTERNAL (A.D.A.) CONSULTANTS	INTERVIEWS ACROSS PROVINCE	FOCUS GROUPS ACROSS PROVINCE	JOHN WHITEHEAD'S GRADS	A.D.C. INTERVIEWS
(i) Risk Analysis	#	●	X	X	#	X
i. Determining Risk Position	¶	¶	¶	¶	#	X
ii. Pay-off Matrix	¶	¶	¶	¶	#	X
iii. Assessing Probability	¶	¶	¶	¶	#	X
(j) Land Investment - Determining Land Values & Production Values	X	X	X	¶	●	¶
(k) Computer Applications	X	#	X	X	●	X
(l) Consultations with: i. Lawyer	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶
ii. Chartered Accountant	X	X	X	¶	¶	#
iii. Extension Agent	¶	¶	¶	¶	#	¶
iv. Farm Mgmnt. Specialist	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶
v. Insurance Rep/Broker	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶
vi. Lender - Banker	X	#	X	X	●	¶
vii. Marketing Consultant	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶
(m) Home Costs i. Family Living Expenses - Budget	X	X	¶	¶	#	¶
ii. New Home Building	¶	X	¶	¶	¶	¶

RATE OF FREQUENCY SYMBOLS: ● = 75%+ # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

BENCH MARK ITEMS/TITLES	GROUPS					
III. In the Marketing Component, they said it was:	EXTERNAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS	INTERNAL (A.D.A.) CONSULTANTS	INTERVIEWS ACROSS PROVINCE	FOCUS GROUPS ACROSS PROVINCE	JOHN WHITEHEAD'S GRADS	A.D.C. INTERVIEWS
(a) Price Forecasting Including Market Information	#	¶	#	#	●	#
(b) Understanding Market Forces (local, regional, national, global)	#	¶	#	#	●	#
(c) Hedging	¶	¶	¶	X	#	¶
(d) Futures Market	¶	¶	¶	X	#	¶
(e) Computer Application	¶	¶	¶	X	¶	¶
(f) Consultations with: i. Chartered Accountant	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶
ii. Extension Agent	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶
iii. Farm Management Specialist	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶
iv. Lender - Banker, Etc.	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶
v. Marketing Consultant	¶	¶	¶	¶	#	¶

RATE OF FREQUENCY SYMBOLS: ● = 75%+ # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

BENCH MARK ITEMS/TITLES	GROUPS					
IV. In the Human Relations (people) Component, they said it was:	EXTERNAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS	INTERNAL (A.D.A.) CONSULTANTS	INTERVIEWS ACROSS PROVINCE	FOCUS GROUPS ACROSS PROVINCE	JOHN WHITEHEAD'S GRADS	A.D.C. INTERVIEWS
(a) Employer-Employee Relations	#	#	¶	¶	●	¶
(b) Estate Planning - Transfer of Property/Question of Fairness	¶	X	¶	X	●	¶
(c) Writing Wills and Reviewing Regularly	¶	¶	¶	X	#	¶
(d) Communications, Wants, Needs, Etc. of Family Members	X	¶	●	#	●	#
(e) Setting Goals and Achieving a Harmonious Family Unit	X	●	#	#	●	#
(f) Management of Stress and Interpersonal Relations - Resolving Conflicts	¶	#	#	#	●	●
(g) Making Partnerships Work (the Human Side)	¶	●	X	¶	●	¶
(h) Negotiating Skills (for Personal/Business Use)	#	X	X	X	●	¶
(i) Computer Applications	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶	¶

RATE OF FREQUENCY SYMBOLS: ● = 75%+ # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

BENCH MARK ITEMS/TITLES	EXTERNAL RESOURCE CONSULTANTS	INTERNAL (A.D.A.) CONSULTANTS	INTERVIEWS ACROSS PROVINCE	FOCUS GROUPS ACROSS PROVINCE	JOHN WHITEHEAD'S GRADS	A.D.C. INTERVIEWS
(j) Communication Skills (how to hear and be heard)	¶	X	¶	¶	●	¶
(k) Retirement Planning	¶	¶	X	¶	#	¶
(l) Time Management	¶	¶	X	X	●	¶
(m) Planning Holiday Time	¶	¶	X	X	#	¶

RATE OF FREQUENCY SYMBOLS: ● = 75%+ # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

I. INTERPRETATIONS OF BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AND HOME MANAGEMENT/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS BY RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The front end data quickly revealed that there are no precise definitions for "business management" and "home management/family relationships", that these are enmeshed in the complex management of the farm business. This complex management technology was delineated as having four major interlinking and equally important components: production, finance, marketing and human resource (people) management.

To simplify this complexity, the gathered data was organized using a classification system and categorized under the four components. Next each component was defined using descriptive titles/items as listed in the left hand column of Table IV. These titles/items derived primarily by the consultant groups, served as bench mark data during the interviews and focus group discussions. That is, when asking the participants for their interpretations[1] of business management and home management/family relationships, the specifics they mentioned spontaneously, with no hesitation would be compared against the bench mark listing to measure similarities/differences.

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1 Great care was taken not to lead the research participants. The questions were posed as outlined in Appendices D and E. Because frequency mentions would be the analytic tool used to discern interpretation variations between groups, it was important to retain a standard approach. In a few instances, it was necessary to probe to assure a thorough examination of the topic areas. However, it was very apparent that "omissions" or "non-mentions" of the bench mark items were not unintentional but rather because the client either had no knowledge of same or knew about them but never habitually applied them to the day to day management of the farm business unit.

The findings, shown in Table IV using symbols, were tabulated by doing a frequency count of the number of times each bench mark item was unhesitatingly mentioned showing the item as an habitual, regular activity in the complex management of a farm business unit. For example, looking at item (a) under the Production component, 75% or more of John Whitehead's graduates who participated in this qualitative research project, stated "decision making regarding variety of crops/ livestock" as a given in their interpretation of business management. The other participating groups, on the other hand, did not mention this item as frequently, as depicted by the symbols. The frequency approach was used province-wide with all groups/individuals contacted.

The use of a table/symbol approach was the most expedient and effective way to manage the volume of information gathered in the research and to demonstrate graphically similarities/differences of interpretation between groups. The symbols in Table IV facilely highlights variations within and between analytical groups. [1]

Table IV descriptively reflects the findings of the study. The similarities and differences exhibited by the groups as to interpre-

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1 The groups participating in the study have been sorted as follows:
External Resource (consultants interviewed outside Alberta Agriculture)
Internal Resource (Alberta Agriculture personnel, provincial and regional)
Focus Groups (province-wide)
John Whitehead's Graduates (purposely segmented to serve as a control grouping)
Farm Family Interviews (province-wide, including Women of Unifarm)
Alberta Development Corporation (A.D.C.) Clients

tation of "business management" and "home management/family relationships" are authentically portrayed; the frequency symbols replicate the author's observations during the research. Earlier in the text, it was stated John Whitehead's graduates were used as a control group in the research. In view of their formal, progressive (not ad hoc) education in farm management skill development, it was pragmatic to discern if their interpretation of the topic areas being researched differed from the other groups, and if so, in what way.

General Interpretation of Business Management

Broadly speaking, all the research participants interpreted "business management" as record keeping and decision-making, with a stronger focus toward production decision-making and some aspects of financial management.

Following are a few typical sample comments:

> "Is the business of running a farm--day-to-day operations. Able to make decisions due to experience. Day-to-day decisions and long range, too, in crop programs, chemical applications, fertilizer applications, varieties, market demands, credit and money rate at bank."
> "Business management can be termed two different ways--business management, business decisions, you have to make decisions on management, for example, should I get a new combine or keep this combine? Need communal, not individual, decisions. Consult with family, friends, neighbours, auction marts. Financial decisions, market reports, information from all sources, including information from successful, experienced farmers."
> "Bookkeeping, feasibility, planning, finances, monthly review, risk analysis."
> "Total handling of farm--expenses, marketing, yearly input/output, everyday record keeping of income and expenses and crop production analysis."
> "Means making decisions, by looking at consequences; is total costs/inputs versus returns; what will make me the most money per acre."

General Interpretation of Home Management/Family Relationships

"Home Management/Family Relationships" was broadly defined as home and family responsibility, time management, stress management, goal setting; as well as communications at all levels of the farm business unit including spousal, nuclear family, extended family, and external relations (employee, resource, personnel, agribusiness, finance, legal, etc.).

Following are some sample comments:

> "Home management is running the house and caring for family. It is lumped together with family relationships. It means anticipating what the business end needs as in meals; time management, planning the whole day for housework, meal preparation and other chores."
> "What is necessary to run a home--groceries, utilities, needs of individuals in family."
> "Keep home going--all activities of family members, their wants, their needs."
> "Time and energy management and resources in the home, management of people, labour, parenting, setting goals, decision making."
> "Home management is time management; family relationships is human side."

Classification Interpretations

Looking at the bench mark items listed in Table IV, the symbols show strongest consensus by all research participants in three titles (at 50%+ frequency mentions):

-keeping financial records,

-management of working capital (day to day, month to month),

-management of term capital.

The next strongest consensus was in six other bench mark items at near unanimous level where five of the six groups mentioned these at a frequency rate of 50%+. These titles were:

-types of financing to buy machinery,

-income tax management, including estate planning,

-price forecasting, including market information,

-understanding market forces (local, regional, national, global),

-setting goals and achieving a harmonious family unit,

-management of stress and interpersonal relations--resolving conflicts.

Beyond the above-mentioned similarities, no other overall consensus was evident in the classification study of the four management components of production, financial, marketing and human resource. The research groups readily show variations in interpretations as Table IV shows; individual study by the reader will provide qualitative evidence of where these differences emanate.

The table also portrays strongly that John Whitehead's graduates, as a group, were consistently better equipped in management skills. They felt "in control" because they had learned basic practical core skills for use as tools in making management decisions with self confidence. They had a more rounded approach in their management of the farm business which was also exhibited by other participating peak performers. As a matter of fact, within the first few minutes of either an interview or focus group discussion, peak performers (no matter what their

their enterprise or the level of their annual gross sales) were quickly recognized by their opening remarks and their interpretation/description of their habitual management activities.

Other distinct observations were noted during the interviews and focus group discussions:

1) Interpretation of the terms "business management" and "home management/family relationships" did not differ between Alberta Agriculture regions. Farm families in the Peace region, for example, use and understand management terminology in the same way as farm families in other regions.

2) An obvious, significant thrust of the peak performing farm families was not just to save dollars and to cut production costs, but to manage profit in order to maximize the income-generating capacity of the farm assets. The two components may sound alike, but there's a tremendous difference between them and their impact on decision-making. Profit management is key and "eagle-eyed" monitoring of day-to-day operations is a must!

3) With a few exceptions, farm women are the bookkeepers. Most of them do not know how to analyze their records. The need to be able to do so was expressed by the majority of women (and for that matter, many of the men, too!). Record analysis skills would allow women to share more actively in the management of the farm business unit.

4) Peak performing farm families maintain control and self-confidence by adopting businesslike practices. They view themselves as

professionals earning a living in the business of farming. To remain competitive, they are diligent, courageous, communicative, and not afraid to make bottom line decisions, mitigate losses, or adjust lifestyle to remain viable/profitable. To them, their operations consist of 90% management, 10% labour. A management error can no longer be corrected with more "hard labour work."

5) Peak performing farm families showed strong evidence of being agressive information seekers.[1] The sophistication level of the information sought was visibly manifested by the management thrust of the enterprise--the more profit oriented, the more global the information sought from sources other than Alberta Agriculture.[2]

6) Other successful practices adopted by peak performing farm families, no matter what their enterprise or range of annual gross sales, were:

    a) They monitor budget and cash flow closely, and review monthly (minimum).

    b) They have an established office and filing system.

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1 Appendix H provides a research notation on "Strengths: Who Makes It and Why".

2 They use commodity brokers, grain dealers, packers, buyers, income tax and various other private consultants/specialists, money managers/investment counsellors, etc.

c) They know and apply "rules of thumb" during decision-making especially with risk analysis (e.g., buy a bull at the price of three calves).

d) Both spouses are fully versed in all aspects of management activities; they do joint goal setting, record analysis, decision-making, seek information aggressively to remain "current, on top of things".

e) They annually (minimum) attend seminars, conferences (not necessarily courses) and the like.

f) They daily read a variety of farm publications (minimum 1 hour).

g) They write a daily journal.

h) They "think" with pen and pencil in hand all the time.

i) They do "catastrophe planning" (what ifs).

j) They watch "needs versus wants".

k) They consciously take living (home, social, recreation) costs into consideration and do not handle them as "something that happens".

l) They plan for "family time" and regular vacation periods.

m) They measure "progress" against short-term (one to two year) goals and longer term goals (in time spans of no more than ten years).

n) They have a balanced lifestyle. Have fun and enjoy life, not all work and no play.

o) They are very sensitive to "people" management.

p) They pay particular attention to time/stress management.

q) They maintain books for making management decisions, not just for tax purposes.

r) They exhibit high self-esteem; know where they are going, have definite short/long-term goals which are not carved in stone and which may be changed if circumstances dictate --"they are in control of their unit".

During the interviews and focus group discussions, additional questions were posed about some specific aspects of the farm family business. Following are the consensus responses to these additional probing questions:

a) Record Keeping Purpose

To the question "What is the single most important reason for keeping farm family records, the majority answered for tax purposes; then for production decision-making (enterprise analysis primarily); financial management and to a lesser degree, to monitor the health of the farm business unit. On the other hand, MATFP participants and John Whitehead's graduates keep records for management decisions...to see what the farm business is doing, where it is going; for profit management; to obtain credit.

b) Farm Dream

The majority stated their dream to be having a debt-free/paid-for enterprise; next was security to own a successful/profitable farm business unit and manageable

liabilities. Third, the stated dream was to make a decent living, to enjoy their lifestyle, and to be able to transfer the farm to the next generation.

c) Why Farming?

Two questions were posed: "Why do you farm?" and "Why do you think others go farming?" The most predominant reason given was lifestyle or way of life. Next was management independence. Mentioned less frequently was born into it, and spouse does it. A few did say it was a career choice to earn a living.

d) How Progress of the Farm Business Unit is Measured

The majority said it was by their business success and subsequently, their security level in their farm business unit. Only a few stated progress was measured in whether or not their short- and/or long-term farm family goals were achieved. Family and community social considerations were also mentioned.

e) Farm Financial Assistance

The Hon. LeRoy Fjordbotten, our former Minister of Agriculture, was interested in obtaining ideas/suggestions vis-a-vis innovative financial methods for agricultural producers. In response to this concern, the question was posed to the research participants to obtain first hand clientele suggestions. At the start of the research, this question did not generate anything meaningful so probing

was redirected instead to adequacy of existing financial assistance (government and non-government) and what other type of assistance would be desired. To this thrust most stated they felt there was adequate financial assistance available but what was critically needed instead was a stable or fixed rate of interest for better control of their farm business unit.

f) Financially Troubled Farm Business Units

Participants were asked if they knew of farm families in financial trouble (friends, neighbours, relatives, etc.). Almost everyone said they knew of their existence. When asked if they could speculate as to "why", the greatest number said likely due to low commodity prices/high input costs and mismanagement. Some did say it was because of high land costs and rising interest rates.

g) Farm Families Less Than 35 Years of Age

When selecting participants for this research project, it was recommended that two groups of farm families be included in the study: a) young families farming less than five years, and b) young families farming between five and ten years. The thinking was that families farming less than five years would have different management information needs due to the fact they started farming during the time land prices and interest rates were rising. The study results did not substantiate this premise. The information needs of both groups were the same.

TABLE V. - FREQUENCY RESPONSES BY PARTICIPANTS AT "MANAGING AGRICULTURE TECHNOLOGY FOR PROFIT" CONFERENCE
(Table V is a replication of Part I from the questionnaire circulated to the conference participants)

TOPIC	BY ALL RESPONDENTS		BY AGE GROUPINGS							
			35 YEARS		35-44 YEARS		45-54 YEARS		55 YEARS	
	ALWAYS/ REGULARLY	SOMETIMES/ NEVER	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N
ON YOUR FARM, DO YOU MAINTAIN:										
Production Records	#	X	#	X	#	X	●	¶	#	#
Weather Records	X	#	¶	●	¶	●	X	#	#	#
Inventory Records	●	X	#	X	●	¶	●	¶	#	X
Loan Records	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Accounting Records	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Income Only Bank Account	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	#	X	●	¶
Expense Only Bank Account	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	#	X	●	¶
Family Spending Records	●	¶	#	X	¶	●	●	¶	#	X
ON YOUR FARM, DO YOU PREPARE:										
Balance Sheets	#	X	#	X	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶

NOTE: A/R = Always/Regularly S/N = Sometimes/Never
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES ● = 75-100% # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

TOPIC	BY ALL RESPONDENTS		BY AGE GROUPINGS							
			35 YEARS		35-44 YEARS		45-54 YEARS		55 YEARS	
	ALWAYS/ REGULARLY	SOMETIMES/ NEVER	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N
Whole Farm and Home Budgets	X	#	X	#	#	X	#	X	X	#
Net Worth Statements	●	¶	#	X	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Income Statements	●	¶	#	X	●	¶	●	¶	#	X
Short Run Plans For Family Farm	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X
Long Run Plans For Family Farm	X	#	#	X	X	#	#	X	X	●
Cash Flow Projections	#	X	#	X	#	X	●	X	#	X
Do You Use Partial Budgets As A Decision Making Tool	#	X	#	X	X	#	#	X	#	#
Do You Do Enterprise Accounting to Determine Profitability	#	X	X	#	#	X	●	X	X	#
ON YOUR FARM, DO YOU DO AN ANALYSIS OF FINANCIAL STATEMENTS TO DETERMINE										
Liquidity Using: Current Ratios	X	#	X	#	X	#	#	X	#	X
Working Capital	#	X	X	#	#	X	#	X	X	#

NOTE: A/R = Always/Regularly S/N = Sometimes/Never
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES ● = 75-100% # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

TOPIC	BY ALL RESPONDENTS		BY AGE GROUPINGS							
			35 YEARS		35-44 YEARS		45-54 YEARS		55 YEARS	
	ALWAYS/ REGULARLY	SOMETIMES/ NEVER	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N
Debt Structure Ratios	X	#	X	#	#	#	#	X	X	#
Solvency Using: Net Worth	#	X	#	#	#	X	●	¶	#	X
Debt - Equity Ratios	X	X	X	#	X	#	●	¶	#	#
Profitability Using: Return to Capital Investment	X	#	X	#	#	●	#	X	#	#
Equity Capital	X	#	X	#	¶	●	#	X	#	#
Financial Efficiency Using: Capital Insurance Ratios	X	#	X	#	¶	●	X	#	¶	●
Debt Servicing Ratios	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#
Machinery Investment Per Acre	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	●
Farm Investment (capital assets - analysis data)	#	X	#	#	#	#	#	X	#	X
Machinery Investment	#	X	#	#	#	#	#	X	#	X

NOTE: A/R = Always/Regularly S/N = Sometimes/Never
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES ● = 75-100% # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

TOPIC	BY ALL RESPONDENTS		BY AGE GROUPINGS							
			35 YEARS		35-44 YEARS		45-54 YEARS		55 YEARS	
	ALWAYS/ REGULARLY	SOMETIMES/ NEVER	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N
Land Investment	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X
Risk and Uncertainty	X	#	#	X	X	#	#	#	X	#
i. Production Risk	X	#	X	#	X	#	#	X	X	#
ii. Market Risk	X	#	#	#	X	#	#	X	X	#
iii. Financial Risk	X	#	X	#	X	#	#	X	X	#
iv. Obsolescence Risk	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●
v. Casualty Loss Risk	X	#	¶	●	X	#	#	#	X	#
iv. Legal Risk	X	#	¶	●	¶	●	X	#	¶	●
vii. Human Risk	X	#	X	#	¶	●	X	#	¶	●
Short and Long Term Financing	#	X	X	#	#	X	●	¶	X	#
ON YOUR FARM, ARE YOU INVOLVED IN: Hedging	¶	●	X	#	X	#	¶	●	¶	●
Futures Market	¶	●	X	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●

NOTE: A/R = Always/Regularly S/N = Sometimes/Never
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES ● = 75-100% # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

TOPIC	BY ALL RESPONDENTS		BY AGE GROUPINGS							
			35 YEARS		35-44 YEARS		45-54 YEARS		55 YEARS	
	ALWAYS/ REGULARLY	SOMETIMES/ NEVER	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N
Forward Contracting of Crops	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●
Tax Planning	#	X	#	X	#	X	●	¶	#	X
Investment Planning	#	X	X	#	#	#	●	X	X	#
Estate Planning	X	#	X	#	X	#	#	X	X	#
Farm/Home Safety: Chemical	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X
Livestock	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X
Personal/Household	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	#
Conservation of Home and Natural Resources	●	¶	#	X	●	X	#	X	●	¶
Insurance Contingency Planning: Livestock	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	●	¶
Equipment	●	¶	●	X	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Building	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Vehicle	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶

NOTE: A/R = Always/Regularly S/N = Sometimes/Never
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TOPIC	BY ALL RESPONDENTS		BY AGE GROUPINGS							
			35 YEARS		35-44 YEARS		45-54 YEARS		55 YEARS	
	ALWAYS/ REGULARLY	SOMETIMES/ NEVER	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N
Sickness & Accident	#	X	X	#	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Disability	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	#	#	X
Life	●	¶	●	¶	#	X	#	X	#	X
ON YOUR FARM, DO YOU:										
Set Priorities Together as a Farm Family	#	X	#	X	X	#	#	X	#	X
Use Established Farm/Family Goals to Measure Success/ Progress	X	#	X	#	X	#	#	X	#	#
Set and Take Personal Time for Family Without Feeling Guilty	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	#	X
Do Comparative Shopping Before Buying Major Farm/Home Items	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Have a Need to Understand the: Younger Child	#	X	#	X	#	#	#	X	●	¶
Teenager	#	X	X	#	#	X	#	X	●	¶

NOTE: A/R = Always/Regularly S/N = Sometimes/Never
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TOPIC	BY ALL RESPONDENTS		BY AGE GROUPINGS							
			35 YEARS		35-44 YEARS		45-54 YEARS		55 YEARS	
	ALWAYS/ REGULARLY	SOMETIMES/ NEVER	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N
Aging Parent	#	X	#	X	X	#	#	#	●	¶
Find It Hard to Set Time Goals	X	#	X	#	X	#	¶	●	X	#
Find You Have Adequate Skills to Control Your Farm Enterprise in: Financial Management	#	X	#	X	X	#	#	X	#	X
Production Management	#	X	#	X	#	#	#	X	●	¶
Marketing Management	X	#	#	X	X	#	●	¶	●	¶
Human (People) Management	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	●	¶
Seek Information to Help Communicate with: Employees	X	#	¶	●	#	X	#	X	#	X
Partners	X	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	#	X
In-Laws	¶	●	X	#	¶	●	X	#	#	X
Children	X	#	¶	●	X	●	X	#	●	¶
Extended Family Members	X	●	¶	●	¶	●	X	#	●	¶
Others in Community	X	#	¶	●	¶	●	X	#	#	X

NOTE: A/R = Always/Regularly S/N = Sometimes/Never
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES ● = 75-100% # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

TOPIC	BY ALL RESPONDENTS		BY AGE GROUPINGS							
			35 YEARS		35-44 YEARS		45-54 YEARS		55 YEARS	
	ALWAYS/ REGULARLY	SOMETIMES/ NEVER	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N
Find It Hard to Cope with Interruptions Especially During Busy Times	X	#	¶	●	X	#	¶	●	#	X
Read a Variety of Printed Materials on a Daily Basis to Stay on Top of things	●	¶	●	¶	#	X	●	¶	#	X
Seek Information From: Friends and Neighbors	●	X	●	¶	●	¶	#	X	●	¶
Wish You Knew How to Handle Stress	X	#	#	X	X	#	X	#	¶	●
Keep Up-Dating Your Will	X	X	X	#	X	#	#	#	#	X
Wish You Could Deal More Easily With Family/Lifestyle Activities	X	#	X	#	X	#	¶	●	X	#
Closely Analyze Profits of Enterprises When Making Decisions to Satisfy Family/ Farm Goals	#	X	#	X	#	X	#	#	#	#
Attend Courses, etc. to Obtain Most Current Management Information	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶

NOTE: A/R = Always/Regularly S/N = Sometimes/Never
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES ● = 75-100% # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

TOPIC	BY ALL RESPONDENTS		BY AGE GROUPINGS							
			35 YEARS		35-44 YEARS		45-54 YEARS		55 YEARS	
	ALWAYS/ REGULARLY	SOMETIMES/ NEVER	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N	A/R	S/N
Seek Computer Software Information	X	#	#	#	X	#	X	#	X	#
WHEN MAKING RISKY DECISIONS Do You: Analyze Alternatives	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Estimate Odds (Probabilities)	#	X	●	¶	#	X	#	X	●	¶
Assess Risk	●	¶	●	¶	#	X	●	¶	●	¶
Assess Payoffs	●	¶	●	¶	#	X	#	X	●	¶
Do You Find That Non-Farmers Say They Have An Appreciation of the Agricultural Industry	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	X	#
ON YOUR FARM, DO YOU DEAL WITH: Accountants	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Lawyers	#	X	#	X	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Bankers	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶	●	¶
Contractors	¶	#	X	#	¶	●	¶	●	X	#
Custom Operators	¶	●	X	#	¶	●	¶	●	#	X

NOTE: A/R = Always/Regularly S/N = Sometimes/Never
FREQUENCY OF RESPONSES ● = 75-100% # = 50-74% X = 25-49% ¶ = 0-24%

Table V shows the results of distributing a questionnaire to the participants attending the "Managing Agriculture Technology for Profit" Conference. The questionnaire incorporated more detailed information derived from the focus groups and interviews.

It is perceived that attendees at the annual MATFP Conference are primarily "peak, successful, sophisticated, knowing, world-wise producers". On that assumption, their responses to the questionnaire could serve as a ratification measure of the bench mark information as per Table IV. In other words, what is it they do to stay on top? Do they use different tools of knowledge, use more of the same, or what?

Compared to Table IV, the MATFP respondents show more strengths in record keeping, financial accounting, contingency planning, and making risk decisions. As to lesser strengths, Table V shows these to be in the marketing and human (people) management areas and in the analysis of financial statements. The respondents are cognizant of these deficiencies as they stated these to be their most important management information needs (see Appendix G).

In addition to the information shown in Table V, more was sought from the MATFP respondents about specific management activities of their farm

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(Note:Table V was visualized by the author as becoming an important program planning reference due to its more precise information, that is, it would consider the four basic management components at once in a non-technical, but more and accurate way. For this reason and because of the reliability of using age as a sound criteria to segment the farm community, the table was sorted by age groupings as well as by all MATFP respondents as one group. The age segmentation was purposely not included in Table IV. The volume of qualitative information would simply have been too much for inclusion in the table.)

family business. They stated very strongly their major reason for keeping records, is not for tax management but for management decisions (by a ratio of 2:1). The majority keep records to see what the business is doing, and where it is going. As with peak performers, both spouses establish priorities together, analyze records together and are both conversant in the "health" of the business at the farm level; accountants are used primarily as consultants.

Specific to computers, one-third of the respondents own computers; another 18 plan to buy within two years, while 22 may buy in the future. The specific help they requested with computers was the following:

- incorporating a computer system,
- how to buy computers,
- what software to purchase,
- how to operate a computer,
- how to organize for best usage.

II. INFORMATION NEEDS OF HIGH IMPORTANCE

This section gives a consensus of the focus groups', interviewees' and MATFP conference participants' responses to the question: "In the business management area (or home management/family relationships area), would you have an information need of high importance to your day-to-day decision-making to maintain a viable farm business unit?"

In business management, the most critical information need mentioned by the respondents by a 2:1 ratio was in the area of marketing.

Specifically:

-how to improve marketing "know how",

-how to do "market analysis",

-learning how to hedge, how to use the futures market,

-the need for and where to get better, more accurate/reliable information on trends, outlooks, projections; short/long-term world/local projections vis-a-vis interest rates, money supply, projection levels, changing people/lifestyle, demographics, etc.

The next two information needs ranked equally in importance were for (i) a progressive, formalized course/program to develop "basic core management skills" ("how-to" basics in marketing, financial, human (people) and production management) to use as tools to make farm business decisions with self-confidence; (ii) and record keeping...how to organize/set up, analyze, interpret, use in decision-making, etc. A not too distant third-ranked information area of importance was financial management... planning/analyzing/financing; credit use/ debt liability ratios; budgeting; cash flow, balance sheets "how-to" and importance of monitoring/analyzing; how to make risky decisions/ analysis/alternatives; investment planning, etc. Additionally, and even though profit management information received a lower ranking by the respondents, it should logically be linked up with financial management information needs. What is wanted under profit management is "how-to" skills to make effective decisions, how to assess advantages/disadvantages, profitability/productivity, etc.

Next in line was a miscellany of specifics categorized as information needs such as: how to retrieve information/statistics/research data and assess value, credibility, reliability, etc.; wanting local practical

(not theoretical) information; local temperature/moisture/yield records; current/up to date information on technological advances; how to choose consultants/specialists (i.e., accountants, lawyers, etc.); how to improve business communications/letters; how to develop winning business habits/strategies; how to obtain more accurate weather forecasts; more details on farm credit, farm laws, business laws, appeal boards, etc.

The information areas of next importance were computers (selection, how to use, Grassroots program, etc.); production management/technology information (production data/costs); current/practical meaningful information; accessing research data to improve production; etc.

The other information areas mentioned were tax management, information delivery (more one on one and more consultation by governments with producers); wills and estate planning; types of farm agreements... pros cons and how to make them work (the human side of things).

In Home Management/Family Relationships, their most prominent information need was in the area of family communications. By a ratio of almost 2:1, the respondents want information on family relationships/interpersonal relations; how to communicate effectively; how to deal with in-laws; how to resolve conflict, how to deal with anger, frustration; details on personal, farm/family stages of development...how they will coincide/conflict; realistic expectations of young and old; changing roles of family members; acknowledging wives and their involvement in the farm business unit, etc.

Next in importance was information on partnership/inter-generational agreements. Topics specifically mentioned were "how to make them work", effective communications to avoid misunderstandings, operational guidelines to beginning farmers especially if going into partnership with parents, practical handling of daily issues, not legal jargon. Pros/cons on types of partnerships...the human side of things; on bridging the generation gap re: roles/expectations of farm family members; fairness of responsibility/rewards; how to "problem solve" adult to adult; how to negotiate, etc.

The third important information need was on stress management (practical, not theoretical, information); recognizing and coping with stress; how to deal with busy seasons; recognizing/understanding farm/interpersonal stressors. Fourth in importance was information on joint farm/family goal setting/decision-making skills. Tied for fifth in importance was household management (budgeting, assessing cost of living realistically, etc.) and time management (organization, making use of time savers; managing time for hobbies, recreation, vacation, etc.)

Appendix G provides a detailed breakdown of the information needs of high importance by two categories: (a) the farm family responses by age segmentation, and (b) those stated by the resource group.

III. PREFERRED METHODS OF OBTAINING INFORMATION

For more effective information program delivery, clients were asked specific questions on this topic. These were their responses:

a) Best days of the week :

Wednesdays, then Tuesdays, then Thursdays.

b) Best time of day :

Strongest preference - weekday afternoons

Next - 10:00 A.M. - 3:30 P.M. and/or late evenings 7:00 - 10:00 P.M.

c) Length of course :

One-shot topic-specific meetings were slightly preferred over two or three session series. If the topic warrants it (that is, in-depth, specific, relevant, etc.), series are okay. However, series longer than three sessions are not favoured. The respondents' message: whatever the topic, it must be specific, in-depth, and worth their time and effort.

d) Hours per week devoted to course :

If the topic warrants it, clients indicate they are prepared to devote more than four hours weekly for a course. Whether they participate or not depends greatly on how the marketing of the course is done.

e) Best months for the course :

February is best by almost a 2:1 ratio over January and March; second best preference is November, with January and March as third best.

f) Advance notice required :

Two weeks advance notice was the overwhelming preference by the respondents. There was lesser support for notices sent

one week, or one month in advance. One week notices are acceptable in irregular, important circumstances. Notices sent one month or more should be followed by reminder notices.

g) Preferred methods to advise of courses, meetings, etc. :

For wide interest public events, over half preferred the use of newsletters (D.A.s/D.H.E.s included), while one-third preferred newspapers. The timing of delivery for mail and paper advertising should be taken into account. Information should be received before, not after, the happening.

For intensive, topic-specific courses/meetings of special interest to a particular segment of the farming community, personalized direct mail and/or phone notices are highly recommended. MATFP participants most strongly preferred direct mail over other methods.

h) The two most important factors in deciding whether or not to take a course/workshop or attend a meeting:

The respondents (interviewees, focus groups, and MATFP Conference participants) were given ten factors to consider for this question:

1. Fees charged for course.
2. Close to home.
3. Accurate description of skill level required to take the workshop or course.
4. How long the course/workshop lasts.
5. Babysitting service provided.
6. Instructor expertise in the course area.
7. Instructor available to answer questions.
8. Friends attending course.
9. Adequate advance content details about the function.
10. Title/subject.

Of the foregoing list, a strong majority indicated two factors as being most important in making a decision about attending a course or meeting.

a) Most important:

Instructor expertise in the course area (the MATFP respondents were more adamant about this factor).

b) Second most important:

Adequate advance content details about the function (each of the groups ranked this factor almost equally).

Accurate description of the skill level required to take a workshop or course, and distance from home were the next two important factors. The following chart provides information on the two most important factors considered by the respondents when deciding whether or not to attend a course/workshop or meeting.

Focus Groups/Interviews

Age	First Factor	Second Factor
Less than 35	Accurate description of skill level required to take course/workshop	Length of course
35-44	" " (2:1 ratio)	Close to home
45-54	Instructor expertise in the course area	Length of course
55+	Adequate advance content details about the function	Close to home

MATFP Participants

Less than 35	Instructor expertise in course area	Adequate advance content details about the function
35-44	" "	" " "
45-54	" "	Title (subject)
55+	" "	Adequate advance content details about the function

Specific to instructor expertise, clients want more profile data on the individual, not just name, title, and degree/degrees obtained. They want to know more about the field experience of the individual to determine the practical value of the information. It was strongly expressed that instructors/speakers should use everyday words, speak to their audience and not above their heads. Instructors should be able to speak clearly and strongly, having a good command of the English language and not be theoretical and academic. Their courses or talks should be relevant to the locale as well as practical.

In addition to the usual details of title, time, place, date, etc., advance notices should have information about the content of the course. Will it be elementary or advanced? What sub-topic areas will be covered? What type of client will this course appeal to particularly? What specific skills are required to take the course or participate in a meaningful way? Lastly, farm families want topic specific in depth specialized information, not broad, umbrella-type information. Courses currently offered are considered too broad. Since time is a precious commodity, they don't want to waste it listening to a "rehash" of the same, nor do they want to drive too far from home--30-40 minutes one way is acceptable.

One client suggested that advance notices have the name of a contact person and his/her phone number to obtain more details if required. It goes without saying that the contact person would know what the event is about and could be reached fairly easily.

Additional points made by the respondents about information delivery:

- more one-on-one assistance;
- need more advanced follow-up courses;
- would like courses to be one shot deals but meaningful;
- would like Alberta Agriculture information less ivory tower, not so complex;
- kit/tape information to take home and work on one's own would be an acceptable method of delivery if topic lends itself;
- use of video cassettes would also be acceptable... one could borrow VCR with cassettes from district office or library;
- toll free information line needed--could be used to discover more information on up-coming sessions, etc.;
- would like to automatically receive relevant, practical information on technological/sociological advances/research findings for farm family usage.
- No "selling" at seminars, conferences, etc.
- Slow down market information on the radio or repeat it to make notes.

The MATFP attendees were asked for additional information on their best sources of information on eight topic areas (as was asked in the Information Needs Study telephone survey). The chart which follows summarizes their responses by age segmentation:

Best Information Source	-35 yrs.	35-44	45-54	55+ yrs.
Daily Market Information	Radio	Radio	Radio	Radio
Market Forecasts	Seminars	Radio	Seminars	Radio
Livestock Production Technology	Magazines Periodicals D.A. (tied)	Seminars	Seminars + Media + Ag. Extension	No definite source
Crop Production Technology	D.A.	Radio	Ag. Extension	D.A. + Alta.Ag. Pamphlets (tied)
Selection & Use Ag. Chemicals	Dealers/ Chemical Reps.	Seminars/ Dealers & Chemical Reps.(tied)	Seminars	D.A.
Business Management Information	Short Courses/ Workshops	Seminars	Seminars	Seminars
Government Policies	Media	Media	Media	Media
Home Management/Family Relationships	Seminars	Family/ Spouse/ Parents	D.H.E.	No definite source

IV. FARM DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

At the request of the Regional Home Economist in Red Deer, a question was posed about the incidence of domestic violence on farms. As a representative on the Alberta Government's newly formed "Cross-Departmental Committee on Family Violence", she wanted to know whether or not drug/alcohol abuse, spouse/child battering, etc. were problems; and, if so, how extensive they were. Were the problems increasing or decreasing? This sensitive topic was gently probed during interviews only; the author felt the focus group participants might not be at ease with the topic in the presence of others.

Of the 33 interviewees, 21 had personal knowledge of alcohol/drug abuse, child abuse and family violence occurring among farm families. As to the extent of the problem, most said it was more evident now than in the past. The problem exists province-wide and is not more pronounced in one Alberta Agriculture region over another.

Following are sample responses given when the question on family violence was posed:

- "Personal knowledge of alcoholism/family suffering, physical abuse between brother/sister."
- "Alcohol abuse, know someone personally. It's a living hell for the people involved. The husband has always been a drinker and he doesn't abuse his family in the physical sense. It's just more abusing himself and that his wife can't rely on him, says things about the kids...more verbal abuse. I've been able to talk to her, just so she could pour out her story. She's gone to Al Anon and she's called about that."
- "Depressions common with farm women and older farmers not adjusting to less work. Men idle and don't know how to handle it."
- "Generation gap (young wives/older wives), lack of self-confidence."
- "Know personally of farm families with alcohol abuse, child abuse, wife battering. Can't step in to help--family is very private."

-"Personally knows of a battered farm wife who does not show up for weeks at a time."
-"Yes--mental abuse and long range effect; alcohol abuse; marital breakups."
-"No personal knowledge in close community. Personal knowledge of spouse battering in own family...information, help needed badly."

Appendix I provides all the responses given to this question.

V. AGRICULTURE IMAGE

During the last few years, several activities have been initiated by the author on this topic. There is much talk among those directly involved in the business of agriculture regarding the degree of non-farmers' appreciation for the industry. This section will report only on the responses given by the participants in this research project; the outcome of the other initiatives will be presented in another more comprehensive report now being compiled.

In this research, the focus group participants responded to a one page questionnaire on specifics about agriculture's image. One set of statements dealt with what they thought urban non-farmers felt about farmers and farming. The other set of statements dealt with their own feelings about farming.

The interviewees were not given the one page questionnaire; instead they were asked "What image do you think nonfarmers have of farmers?" With everyone, during the topic discussion, probing was made as to their awareness of "Agaware", Alberta's Agricultural Awareness Institute.

Focus Group Responses

More than 75 % of the respondents agreed that urban non-farmers think that farming leads to an independent lifestyle.

More than 50 % of the respondents agreed that urban non-farmers think that farmers are rich, independent,chronic complainers and that farming is a low status occupation.

When asked if they thought urban non-farmers think that farming is a stressful way of living and is important to the economy, again more than half of the respondents disagreed with the statements.

As to whether farmers are thought hard working, happy and poorly educated there was agreement with the statements but with less conviction...almost one-third of the respondents circled 3 on a scale of 1 (strongly agree) to 5 (strongly disagree). As to their own feelings about farming, over three-quarters of the respondents agreed with the statement farming allows you to be your own boss.

More than half of the respondents agreed that farming is an ideal way of living, and that beginning farmers must have some training and education in agriculture.

More than half also disagreed with the statements that farmers have no control over production management and land use decisions and I would encourage my children to go into occupations other than farming.

Interview Responses

The interviewees across the province reinforced the above findings vis-a-vis what urban non-farmers think of farmers and farming. Most said

urbanites have no full appreciation of the agriculture industry and its economic contribution to society's well-being, that they have little or no knowledge of the business complexity and stressful demands of farming ...that farming is still viewed as an easy going lifestyle in a pastoral milieu; that farmers make lots of money plus being rich landowners. More than 75 % of the MATFP respondents said "sometimes/never" when asked "Do you find that non-farmers say they have an appreciation of the agricultural industry."

Not very many of the research respondents were familiar with Agaware and indicated a strong interest in learning more about it. The author promised to include promotional brochures on Agaware when mailing out their copy of this research report.

The author also observed that many farm families exhibited low self-esteem. A dynamic province-wide program telling the story of agriculture by the producers themselves could help build greater self confidence and pride. Alberta Agriculture, with its excellent communications resource/ expertise could certainly act as a facilitator/trainer in such a campaign.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Alberta Agriculture's stated primary objective is that of helping Alberta's agricultural producers maintain economically viable farm family business units. It is on that basis the recommendations in this section have been formulated.

Management Skills Development Programs

1. Need

a) There is an urgent need for programs aimed at strengthening business management abilities of farm unit managers. The required program information needs to be organize using a classification system to provide a standard for designing core skills programs for farm family benefits. A mesh of the classification information provided in Tables IV and V of this research project, the skills profiled for the farm business unit manager in the Green Certificate Program and the Lethbridge College course outline College course outline under John Whitehead's direction.

b) Business management core skill development courses are critically needed at thedistrict level. Currently, these types of courses are offered only at formal institutions of learning at distant points and, so, are not readily availsble to farm clients. Readily accessible district courses should be progressive, practical and adequate enough to enable learners to acquire basic, necessary critical skills for use as tools to make sound farm business management decisions with self-confidence and to feel in control of their farm business units. The courses must emcompass all the major interlinking components of production, financial, marketing and human resources. Focussing only on one or two components and not all four because of a question of territorial responsibility would victimize the farm clientele.

c)There is a critical need to focus more strongly on human resource (people) management for farm families. Due to their spacial separation, information on time/stress management and how to communicate effectively is not readily available locally. When the viability of a farm unit is affected by poor family member interaction/communication, employee, etc., Alberta Agriculture's network of district offices should deliver more aggressively such types of programs.[1]

Nowadays research is being done on animal stress and it's resultant economic cost; thus, shouldn't human stress warrant a greater proactive stance by Alberta Agriculture? The research participants felt the Department does not do much about helping clients deal with stress nor perceived that it is willing to deal with it.

The urgent need is to provide seminars/workshops to farm clients on:

-how to maintain effective family communications

-how to resolve conflict/anger

-how to negotiate with power, winning strategies to use

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[1] A positive stride toward satisfying this need was taken at Region I's "Decisive Communications" regional meeting in September 1985 where staff were provided guidelines in counselling/ communicating effectively and recognizing client stress levels.

-how to resolve conflict/anger

-how to negotiate with power, winning strategies to use

-how to develop powerful communications (voice, body language, dress, mannerisms, etc.)

-developing more sophisticated business skills.

d)Family living budgets and cost records were seldom mentioned as being habitually taken into account in farm business management decision-making except by John Whitehead's graduates. The graduates stated it was imperative these costs be included in cash flow projections because day-to-day living costs must come from net income.

During the research, there was evident need and demand for information on realistic farm living expenditures. Since there is very little data available in this area, it is strongly recommended D.H.E.s continue studies on farm living expenditures. Their studies would provide realistic cost figures for Alberta farm families to use as bench mark amounts if they have no cost records of their own to use as reference. Since farm family living expenditures (including hobbies, recreation and vacations) are critical to the health, viability of the farm business unit, Alberta Agriculture staff should make farm family living costs and record keeping mandatory requirements in all farm business management skill development courses.

e)To maximize the economic viability of a farm business unit (whether single ownership or partnership) there is a need to promote a concept of specialization within the unit, particularly

with regard to farm women. Alberta's farm women want skill training to become more active in the management of the farm business. For example:

-They want to learn how to analyze/interpret records (they keep the books, but don't know what the figures mean).

-They want to learn how to buy and sell cattle/grain and how to hedge in the commodities market.

-They want to learn how to chart accounts for use in marketing decision-making.

A few indicated an interest in learning skills to become the controller of the farm unit; some wished to learn the complex science of animal breeding; and several indicated they wanted to learn how to operate specialized machinery since they felt that their TLC would better safeguard that capital investment than untrained hired help.

f)Farm families need help to verbalize short and long term goals in everyday language as well as how to make joint decisions. A sound practical approach would be to state these by lifecycle stages.

2.Delivery

a)This research project did not generate a standard definition of "business management" and "home management/family relationships"; there was only a thread of common interpretation among the respondents. Therefore, in order to "talk the same language", have

mutual understanding and avoid miscommunication, Alberta Agriculture should provide leadership and undertake the responsibility of designing , implementing and promoting a standard province-wide, comprehensive, formalized (not ad hoc, not band aid) basic skill development course in business management for farm clients. A province-wide approach would foster a common basis of understanding between staff, producers and, by virtue of interaction, all others involved in the business of agriculture. As was mentioned earlier in this report, business management information is not interpreted differently in any part of Alberta

b) The delivery of business management core skill development courses at the district level should be by staff with a committed interest and willingness to gain the necessary expertise to conduct the course at a practical relevant level. A joint team approach of both D.A. and D.H.E. would be ideal, reinforcing the husband/wife team of a farm unit. Failing that, a regionally based travelling resource team is an alternative worthy of consideration.

Adoption of the above implies that the Department accepts a mandate to develop viable economic farm units and is prepared to provide through its district field services personnel one-on-one consultations[1] with farm families to build their self-confidence

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1 Donald Pelz, in his 1983 research, and Rogers (1983) established that where an innovation requires adjustment in human behaviour, people tend to use interpersonal channels, while people tend to use impersonal channels where an innovation relies on "hard technology."

and their abilities to make sound business management decisions. Such a commitment will be time-consuming so staff assigned to this priority will need to be freed of routine activities to meet this time demand.

c)As a next step to the above, programs to expand/refine/updateI management abilities or to provide more technical, sophisticated information should be delivered to clients based on their identified needs. For example, many producers want marketing information, in particular "how to use the futures market". On a select invitation basis, agricultural producers could be invited to hear a futures expert at an in-depth seminar on a fee basis... producers have indicated that they would be prepared to meet this type of expense. Other marketing topics of major interest are: how to determine profits associated with marketing alternatives, "global impacts/trends of currencies, exchange rates", "changing world demographics/market impacts, etc.

> "The era of professional farm managers is here--commercial agriculture has come of age; farming as a lifestyle is no longer; it's a competitive business to earn a living! The hard work of the old-style family farmer will no longer compensate for some hard economics."

d)The use of age as a factor to segment Alberta farm families is sound and reliable, particularly in matters dealing with human resource (people) and financial management topic areas. Life-cycle planning by stages of development (personal, family, business) is a predictable universal and legitimate approach to conducting needs assessments, formulating policy, establishing program planning priorities, and/or carrying out program evaluations.

e)More precise client marketing of management programs will be necessary. Marketing is different from advertising: it is the business of gaining a competitive edge by being more client directed, being more client focussed. For example, Alberta agricultural producers are prepared to attend small, intense, topic-specific seminars with experts/consultants at a reasonable fee subject to criteria outlined on pp.46 - 51. For this to succeed, a need is implied for more precise district mailing lists to reach the appropriate groups of farm clients.

Staffing/Training

a)There is a need for specialists with GLOBAL perspectives who can be readily contacted as information resources by the farm business managers in their decision-making activities. A particular need was indicated in marketing and finances and in changing world demographics.

b)Staff training will be required to develop awareness skills in (i) how to hear and how to be heard to become more effective in consultations with farm families, (ii) obtaining an understanding of the dynamics of family violence and to be provided with the information and skills to identify early warning signals of violent behaviour and in determining practical ways of reaching those who would most benefit by violence prevention programming, and (iii) recognizing life cycle stages...personal, family, farm. Additionally, for staff to gain a greater understanding of the unique problems in businesses run by families, every district office should have a reference copy of the book The Family in Business by Rosenblatt, de Mik, Anderson and Johnson. The authors of this book offer a portrayal of the tensions, conflicts and other problems of families who own businesses (see Appendix H for details).

c)It would be valuable to expose staff to the Diesing model framework in decision making as was used to train extension staff in Minnesota recently. The Minnesota materials were designed to broaden agents' appreciation of the types of decisions families must and would be facing and to provide them with some understanding of the types of decisions possible. The different types of decisions the model sorts out are technical, economic, social, legal and political.

d)It would also be valuable if staff were exposed to the work done by Alberta Shapero from Ohio State University. Shapero is one of

the leading academic advocates of entrepreneurs and small business. He contends that people don't start a new business to make money, but rather, the main motivation is to gain control over their lives. Similarly, the Alberta farm families surveyed in this study agreed that they farmed to provide themselves with management independence. However, these families felt they did not possess adequate business management skills to gain control of their business/lives. Field staff would be advised to consider this factor in promoting skill development courses in business management.

Future Research

a) The information provided by the farm families in this qualitative research project offers immediate and beneficial program planning direction for Alberta Agriculture staff at all levels--district, regional and provincial. If it is deemed necessary to ratify the findings at an inferential level, Alberta Agriculture needs to conduct a province-wide (regional basis is not necessary) mail/telephone survey of farm families. To obtain results at a 95 % confidence level, about 1,000 responses would be required.

b) Similar to the finding of the Information Needs Study by Heffring, this study found that information provided by Alberta Agriculture is not perceived as being based on experience, practical and easy to apply, or local and applicable to the area. It would be advantageous to explore this perception in more detail by surveying the farm clients again to obtain their specific expectations.

c) It would be expedient to make available funds/resources/facilities to conduct a research study in Alberta to measure the degree of appreciation for the agriculture industry. The fundings would determine the accuracy of the perceptions on this matter by the farm families and provide decisive program planning data to the recently launched Agaware group (Agricultural Awarenesss Institute). A shopping mall interview serving method would be appropriate for this study at a modest cost if joint shared between Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Universities, farm organizations, individual farm families, etc.

Other

a) The term "family farm" should be changed to either farm family or farm business unit. The term "family farm" subtly reinforces the image that families choose to farm because of lifestyle and not to earn a living. Somehow, farming as a complex business is not strongly perceived. Alberta Agriculture should provide leadership by overtly switching the "labels" in all future communications about agricultural producers. At the same time, Department managers should inform/lobby the politicians regarding this thrust. In the end, the change would enhance agriculture's image and its importance to the well being of Albertans.

b)There is a need to redefine "farm" so as to determine more precisely what is being talked about. Is it a commercial business farm with total income derived from farm activities? Is it a quasi-commercial farm business unit? Is it a rural family dwelling or a recreational farm whose major income source is non-farm? Is it both?

Redefining "farm" would help Alberta Agriculture determine which group of farm families should receive priority attention. The author's observation is that farm partnerships of parents/children require priority attention--many existing units are struggling due to economic/family relationship difficulties. Small or middle scale farm units with little or no promise of succeeding as viable economic units may require special attention. (Note: An extension approach to handle the above might be to adopt Minnesota's recent program entitled "Minnesota Extension Service Tackles Rural Problems".)

c)Other specific recommendations from farm families:

-They expressed a need for good consulting services from district offices, that is, someone who can make them aware of all local/regional facilities and/or information centres. (Note: To meet this need Minnesota Extension developed a directory identifying community resources.)

-They also expressed a wish for the district office to circulate profile information about the specialists at Alberta Agriculture...what they do/how they can help, etc.

-In order to retain peak performance in the business of farming, they would like to receive a listing of papers and other publications as highly recommended readings.

-Strongly suggest continuing to consult with them via focus groups, allowing them more direct input into programming and/or policy setting.

d)Lastly, a comment was made about the Hall of Fame being an activity for a closed select club of farmers and civil servants. Alberta Agriculture might consider reviewing this program's criteria and instead recognize farm family units (beginning or established) exhibibiting good business management acumen.

APPENDIX A

LIFE CYCLE MATRIX -- AGE AND CYCLE COMPONENTS

Age and Cycles	HEFFRING	LEVINSON	BREWKA	AMER. COUNCIL LIFE INSURANCE	BARRY, ET. AL	BENNETT
15	15-34	17-45 (30 transition)	Stage I	Establishment	Start	Establishment
25				Development		
35	35-55		Stage II	Maximization	Growth	Development
45		40-65 (50 transition)	Stage III	Maintenance	Consolidation	Maintenance
55	55+		Stage IV	Consolidation	Transfer	Redevelopment (winding down)
65		65+	Stage V	Retirement		

APPENDIX B

TEMPORAL RHYTHMS OF LOCAL COMPONENTS -- A TYPICAL AGRIFAMILY SYSTEM

COMPONENT	ENTERPRISE MANAGER	ENTERPRISE	NUCLEAR FAMILY HOUSEHOLD	INSTRUMENTAL NETWORK
FUNCTIONS	Decisions & Tasks-- Accomplishment	Economic & Technical	Reproduction & Socialization	Reciprocal Exchange
CYCLES	Bachelor (starter) ↓ Establishes ↓ Develops ↓ Slows Down ↓ Retires ↓ New Operator	Establishment Phase ↓ Development Phase ↓ Maintaining Phase ↓ Redevelopment Phase (winding down)	Courtship ↓ Marriage ↓ Birth & Training of Children ↓ Transmission of Headship ↓ Courtship/Marriage	Wife's Family Added Offspring's Family Added
PROCESS	AGING	DEVELOPING	EXPANDING & CONTRACTING	RAMIFYING & ATTENUATING

Source: Adapted from John W. Bennett, 1982. Of Time and the Enterprise: North American Family Farm Management in a Context of Resource Marginality (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press), Figure 5.6, p. 142.

APPENDIX C

MEETING GOALS BY STAGES, FROM SCHOOL TO RETIREMENT

One way of looking at goals and meeting them is suggested by Grace W. Weinstein in her book "The Lifetime Book of Money Management" (NAL Books, $19.50). She calls the method "life cycle planning." It's based on events and goals at various stages of one's life. In part, the list goes like this:

AGES 18-24

- Establish household.
- Train for career.
- Identify long-range goals.
- Begin to attain financial independence.
- Start a savings program.
- Establish a credit identity.
- Begin to invest.
- Buy insurance.
- Develop a financial recordkeeping system.

AGES 24-40

- Provide for childbearing and child-rearing costs.
- Provide for expanded housing needs.
- Expand career goals.
- Manage increased need for credit.
- Invest for capital growth.
- Build an education fund.
- Expand insurance to meet expanding needs.
- Write a will; name a guardian for children.
- Involve every member of the household in financial management.

AGES 41-50

- Continue career development.
- Diversify investments.
- Provide greater income for growing needs.
- Continue to build education funds; provide education for children.
- Begin to develop estate plan.
- Explore retirement goals.
- Review and revise will as necessary.

AGES 55-64

- Evaluate and update retirement plans.
- Concentrate on income-producing investments.
- Review insurance and reduce coverage where not needed.
- Decide where to live in retirement.
- Meet responsibilities for aging parents.
- Review estate plan.

SOURCE: The Christian Science Monitor, April 8, 1986, p. B6.

APPENDIX D

FARM FAMILY INTERVIEW OUTLINE

1. Introduction

   - Thanks for cooperating to hold this interview.
   - Reiterate purpose of research project, its end usage.
   - Give an historical review of activities leading to this assignment (show survey data on page 75 of the provincial report on the Information Needs of Alberta Farmers and Farm Families).
   - Review my process to fulfill my assignment and the criteria used to select farm families for interviewing province-wide.
   - Reiterate how I got their names.
   - Stress "informality" of interview, spontaneity desired, also freedom not to answer the questions I will be posing.
   - Indicate topic areas I will address.
   - Findings will be reported anonymously and will be aggregated.
   - Permission to tape? Explain purpose of recording.

2. Questions

   - What do you mean by "business management"? (Probe for specific skills.)
   - What do you mean by "home management"? (Probe for specifics.)
   - What do you mean by "family relationships?" (Probe for specifics, key words, human factor, labour relations.)
   - In the business management area, would you have an information need of high relative importance to your day-to-day decision making?
   - In the home management area, would you have an information need of high relative importance to your day-to-day decision making?
   - In the family relationships area would you have an information need of high relative importance to your day-to-day decision making?
   - How do you measure your success on the farm? (Probe for specifics. Bottom line at end of year? Against goals/objectives? How are decisions made? How long range do you plan? Etc.)
   - Do you have a dream for your farm?
   - Why do you farm? (Probe: To earn a living? Way of life? Career choice?)
   - With regard to public notices, what would be your preferred method of being advised of forthcoming information programs in management areas? (Probe: lead time, method.)
   - What would be your preferred method to obtain information or learn about management subjects? [Probe format (one day seminar, lectures, home study, etc.), time of day, day of week, time of year, fees, travel time/distance, etc.]

- Besides the usual givens of time, place, date, topic, what other factors are important to you in deciding whether or not to take a course or program? (Probe: Speaker profile? Content areas? Level of instruction (beginner or)? Output expectations, etc.)
- At the present time do you feel there is adequate financial assistance available to farmers, either through financial institutions or government programs?
- What type of assistance would you like to see for financially troubled farmers?
- What does "business like" mean to you?
- Looking at farm management as a technology, which terminology do you prefer
  - Business of Farm Managing?
  - Managing the Farm Business?
  - Farm Management?
  - Farm Business?
  - The Business of Managing a Farm?
  - ?
- What image do you think non-farmers have of farmers? (Probe: Who should tell agriculture's story? Do you know of AgAware? Would you support? Etc.)
- Do you personally know of alcohol abuse, drug abuse, child abuse, family violence occurring among farm families? (Probe sensitivity re: extent, what, where, etc.)
- Demographics
  - Age
  - Average annual gross sales
  - Type of enterprise
  - Type of business arrangement
  - Farm cycle stage
  - Off-farm employment?
  - Membership in volunteer organizations other than commodity?
  - If yes, what, member and/or executive capacity?
- Closing
  - Correct mailing address.
  - Promise to send out a summary report of research findings when it becomes available.

APPENDIX E

FOCUS GROUP DISCUSSIONS --MODERATOR'S OUTLINE

Introduction

A. Introduce myself - my position - role of Secretariat with Alberta Agriculture.

B. Indicate purpose of today's discussion:
   - start with a short historical review of Information Needs Study and purpose.
   - share provincial survey results on importance of information areas (use table on page 75 of Information Needs Study).
   - job today is to learn what they mean by "business management" and "home management/family relationships".
   - mention end usage of the findings of this research project.

C. Indicate this is an informal discussion - what is needed is your opinion, you are not going to be judged.
   - Just so we can talk freely, and I won't have to write down what you say, the conversation will be taped. Try to talk one at a time so I'll later be able to hear your opinions clearly. Of course, everything we talk about today is confidential.
   - Please use everyday words.
   - I'll guide the conversation, the questions, and watch the time (aiming to be finished in 1½ hours but for sure no longer than 2 hours).
   - Help yourself to coffee, goodies as we go along.
   - After discussion, will ask you to fill in two questionnaires to supplement this discussion; the questions are more personal in nature than the discussion will be.
   - Why don't we start off with each of you telling the group your first name and a little about yourself -- where you live, about your farm operation, how long you have been farming, etc.?
   - Once done, ask "any questions before we start discussion?"
   - Turn tape on to record.

Discussion Questions

A. Rotate starting point

B. Questions

1. What do you mean by "business management"?
2. What do you mean by "home management/family relationships?
3. How do you measure progress/success on your farm?
4. Why do you farm?
5. Why do you think others go farming? Career choice or ???
6. Are you aware of farm families in financial trouble?
   Why do you think they are in financial difficulties?

7. What image do you think non-farmers have of farmers?
8. Terminology preference (if time permits).

Closing

A. Hand out questionnaires and allow time to answer.
B. When done, pay honorarium.
C. Obtain correct mailing address for mailing out summary of research findings by signing for same + Agaware info.
D. Thanks for cooperating.

APPENDIX F

"STRENGTHS: WHO MAKES IT AND WHY?" (RESEARCH NOTATION)

Scientists have upheld the idea that information seekers are likely to perform well and achieve their goals. For example, Dr. H.I. McCubbin, Dean, Faculty of Family Research, University of Wisconsin, speaking on "Strengths: Who makes it and Why?" pointed out that families do better if they have:

a) vital communication, especially marital communication, across all stages of the life cycle. It's always important and it should be emphasized that a commitment to the marriage is vital or the family will not work.

b) the ability to be flexible, to re-examine values, and set priorities is an important strength.

c) coherence -- If a family has predictability, controlability, manageability, and trust, they will cope better.

Because there are many circumstances totally out of one's control, research data indicate that families need information to attempt to forecast what's going to happen. Aggressive information seekers are rewarded with a sense of predictability and this contributes to a feeling of trust that they have some control over life events. Passive families who accept only what they hear are in trouble, whereas healthy families seek information. Finally, families who can take large problems and redefine them in manageable terms do better. Being overwhelmed by the big picture leads to more problems. Information, predictability, and manageability leads to trust in oneself and in the family.

APPENDIX G

"BUSINESS MANAGEMENT" AND "HOME MANAGEMENT/FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS" INFORMATION NEEDS OF GREAT IMPORTANCE TO ALBERTA FARM FAMILIES IN ORDER TO MAINTAIN A VIABLE FARM

For easier reference, this appendix was formatted using two factors: a) by age segmentation of families (focus groups, interviewees, and and MATFP attendees) and as a b) resource group (Alberta Agriculture, regional managers/specialists and external consultants). Next, for easier tabulation and/or cross-referencing , the data were categorized under broad subtitles in each major topic area in order of importance. The frequency mentions by the research participants determined this ranking.

BUSINESS MANAGEMENT AS INDICATED BY:

(a)Farm Families Age 35 or Less

(i)Business Management Skill Development

-"Wanting one-on-one help with a management program package--from bookkeeping to analysis to future growth, "how-to" basics. Especially need help with analyzing figures. Practical , not theory. (6 mentions)

-"More management tools/skill development for decision-making with self-confidence."

(ii) Profit Management

-"Need a system in order to make proper decisions. Need to access information, analyze every facet to weigh advantages/disadvantages, need to prioritize activity." (6 mentions)

-"How to make more money, specifically alternative cropping, different types of crops that could be seeded in area--something more profitable than wheat and oats."

(iii) Marketing/Futures Market

-"Need resources to obtain marketing information. A big part of management is not trying to know everything yourself, but to know who to talk to. You need an expert in a particular field--not just the D.A." (2 mentions)

-"There is a weakness in accurate market information."

-"Farmers have good knowledge of production, but poor in marketing information."

-"Need information on futures/stock market."

(iv) Partnership Information

-"On-farm agreements--pros/cons of partnership, limited company, single owner without taking away individual members' rights and responsibilities." (2 mentions)

(v) Tax Management

-"On best use of income tax to get greatest return. For example, paying spouse." (2 mentions)

(vi) Computers

-"Information on best computer system to purchase." (2 mentions)

-"Encourage farmers to use Grassroots program and facilities for computer use should be more available. That is, more current information, more accessible...all forms including general farming, comparisons between machinery, types of grain that would be best suited for your soil type. Also need information on best types of financial asssistance available." (2 mentions)

-"Computer courses." (2 mentions)

(vii) Production Information

-"Accurate weather forecasts."

-"District temperature, moisture and yield records."

-"Would like to be kept updated, informed on any new developments and technological advances."

(viii) Record Keeping

-"Need for a record system to serve all needs (tax, cash flow, balance sheet, etc.)."

-"Accounting book oriented to income tax."

-"Bookkeeping courses closer to home (those of interest are 20 miles away)."

(ix) Forecasting

-"Learning forecasting techniques (interest rates, money supply, production levels)."

(x) General

-"Alberta and Canada Agriculture should talk with other farmers and dealers."

b) MATFP Attendees Age 35 or Less

(i) Financial

-"Financing and financial management, financial analysis/planning." (4 mentions)

-"Investment planning."

(ii) Marketing/Futures Markets

-"Marketing/world markets." (2 mentions)

-"Hedging/commodity futures." (2 mentions)

(iii) Business Management

-"Wills and estate planning,"

-"Solvency/liquidity."

-"Ratio analysis."

(iv) Computers
-"Computer software information/courses in using same."

c) Farm Families Age 35-44

(i) Marketing/Futures Market
-"World and local market projections and productions." (7 mentions)
-"More on market forces in Canada, worldwide." (4 mentions)
-"Marketing know-how."
-"Local market information, not only regional, provincial, national."

(ii) Record Keeping
-"Setting up/keeping an accurate, effective set of books/records." (6 mentions)
-"How to organize and analyse records." (3 mentions)
-"Daily organizing of data."
-"How to evaluate statements and implications."
-"How to simplify the bookkeeping system."

(iii) Business Management/Skill Development
-"Skill development to use as reliable tools to make effective decisions." (2 mentions)
-"How to choose a good accountant."

(iv) Production Information
-"Production data/costs." (3 mentions)
-"Technical information, that is, chemicals, fertilizers, etc." (2 mentions)
-"Current, meaningful production technology information." (2 mentions)
-"Assessing research data for production improvement."

(v) Forecasting
-"More direct/detailed print information on trends/outlooks." (2 mentions)

(vi) Computers
-"Computer purchasing information, application." (2 mentions)
-"Understanding and operating computers."

(vii) Financial
-"Information on farm credit."

(viii) Other
-"Information on appeal boards."
-"Availability of stats and research data on agriculture technology."

d) MATFP Attendees Age 35-44

(i) Financial
-"Financing and financial management, financial planning/analysis." (3 mentions)

(ii) Profit Management
-"Farm economics/profitability/productivity." (3 mentions)

(iii) Business Management
-"Making risky decisions/analysis/alternatives."
-"Wills and estate planning."

(iv) Computers
-"Computer software information/courses."

(v) Record Keeping
-"How to analyze farm records."

(vi) Tax Management
-"Tax planning/management."

(vii) Marketing/Futures Markets
-"Marketing "how-to".

e) Farm Families Age 45-54

(i) Marketing/Futures Market
-"Better market trends information, more accurate price forecasts." (5 mentions)
-"A hedging school to protect farmers."

(ii) Record Keeping
-"Need information on bookkeeping and analysis of records." (5 mentions)

(iii) Production Information
-"Up to date technical information: grains, cattle sprays, chemicals, cropping/machinery innovations." (5 mentions)

(iv) Computers
-"Need for computer courses...show farmers what's available...hardware/software programs. Grassroots program has much merit." (3 mentions)

(v) Financial
-"Budgeting; having people in lending institutions understand agriculture's problems."
-"Up to date information on financial markets."

(vi) Forecasting
-"How to market better, tools for forecasting." (2 mentions)

(vii) Business Management
-"Need information on business communications, business letters."
-"Decison-making...information needed on how to make decisons once information on production, marketing, financial has been obtained."
-"How to obtain correct/reliable data."
-"Where to get information over and above own resources and that of neighbours/friends."

(viii) Other
-"Want practical information, not theory."
-"Want one-on-one treatment with district office staff, counselling/information service."
-"Want good reliable information, not educated guesses."
-"Want information pertaining to local area."

f) MATFP Attendees Age 45-54

(i) Marketing/Futures Markets
-"Marketing "how-to" and marketing information." (5 mentions)

(ii) Financial
-"Financing and financial managment." (3 mentions)
-"Farm and home budgeting."

(iii) Business Management
-"Wills and estate planning." (3 mentions)

(iv) Computers
-"Computer software information."

(v) Tax Management
-"Tax planning and management." (2 mentions)

(vi) Other
-"Conservation of home and natural resources."

(g) Farm Families Age 55 and Over

(i) Marketing/Futures Markets
-"Market information, market trends (short- and long-term projections." (4 mentions)
-"Futures market, hedging course."
-"They want a resource person available for contact on 'futuring' information."

(ii) Financial
- "Money management, financial records analysis." (2 mentions)
- "Machinery purchasing worth the investment?"
- "Capital investment information."

(iii) Record Keeping
- "Information on effective record keeping."

(iv) Computers
- "Computer programs."
- "How to tie into Grassroots program...already have a computer and knowledge to use different programs."

(v) Business Management
- "Want decision-making using pencilling "how-to"."
- "Want courses on how to deal with unknown and uncontrollable--weather, crop failures and resulting depression, feeling of loss/failure, stress."

(vi) Business Management Skill Development
- "Want a course to develop management skills like John Whitehead's program."
- "Skill course on welding, solar heating, farm/home repairs."

(vii) Other
- "Courses to provide young people career information on farming, especially farm kids--do they really want to farm? If so, they need further education--not just finish high school and stay on farm."
- "Beginning farmers need post-secondary education and a chance to try alternative careers before going farming."

h) MATFP Attendees Age 55 and Over

(i) Business Management
- "Wills and estate planning."
- "Making risky decisions/analysis/alternatives."
- "Information on family business arrangements."

(ii) Profit Management
- "How to make the farm profitable and retire at 65 years of age."

(iii) Computers
- "Computer software information/courses on using same."

(iv) Tax Management
- "Tax planning/management."

i) Resource Group

(i) Record Keeping

-"Effective record keeping/analysis." (5 mentions)
-"Farmers need to be taught to analyse and interpret records." (3 mentions)
-"Farmers must be given hands-on practice to interpret their own information, to monitor the health of their farm unit, not rely on accountants, consultants or bankers." (3 mentions)
-"Need for analysis and tax accounting." (2 mentions)
-"How to set up books."
-"There is a need for an efficient farm business management system adaptable to computerization."

(ii) Financial

-"Need how to prepare balance sheets, cash flow projections."
-"Farmers hate paying taxes and as a consequence, make crazy, uneconomical decisions...need information concerning tax planning."
-"Farmers need help to purchase machinery."
-"Weakest area for farmers in understanding debt liability."
-"Need to change attitude toward credit management and overall business management--money before production. Financial management is the critical factor."
-"Farmers need help in budgeting to project cash flow requirements." (2 mentions)
-"Need to teach the profit motive to farmers."
-"Need cash flow, balance sheets, concept of costs vs returns."

(iii) Business Management

-"Successful farmers seek out information constantly--regularly attend seminars, conferences and usually have a high profile in community." (3 mentions)
-"Need "what if" and catastrophe planning." (2 mentions)
-"Successful farmers anticipate increasing costs, interest rates, etc. Accept realities of business world."
-"Farmers need help in assessing risk--possible only if they have a good set of books. For example, ensure against catastrophe, not security." (2 mentions)
-"Farmers need to do comparison over past years, apply rules of thumb, etc." (3 mentions)
-"Farmers need to be taught businesslike habits, for example, business name for farm, business chequing account, business letterhead, etc."

(iv) Marketing/Futures Markets

-"Need to educate farmers on market "how-to"."

-"Farmers need help to do market analysis."
-"Farmers need contact with marketing specialists so they can anticipate price fluctuations."
-"Farmers are weak on sales, strong on mechanics."

(v) Business Management Skill Development

-"Farmers need to learn basic, reliable managment skills to use as tools to make decisions with self-confidence and be in control of their farm family operations." (3 mentions)

(vi) Other

-"Farmers need information on legal requirement of going into business."
-"Farmers need to discuss success...how measured, by whom?...That larger may not be better, etc."
-"Farmers need to be given simple guidelines to make decisions."
-"There is a need to teach that farming is a complex business that requires sound management practices to earn a living.It's a profession requiring professional application." (2 mentions)

HOME MANAGEMENT AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AS INDICATED BY:

a) Farm Families Age 35 or Less

(i) Stress Management

-"On practical, not theoretical, information on stress management."
-"Recognizing and coping with stress; how to deal with busy, stressful times." (5 mentions)

(ii) Effective Communications (Family/Spousal/Partnerships)

-"On communcations skills--how to communicate effectively. Family relationships/interpersonal relations--anything that helps my family understand me and my needs and vice versa." (5 mentions)
-"On partnership information/communications...how to make partnerships work to avoid misunderstandings...practical handling of daily issues, not legal jargon. Pros/cons on types of partnerships. Human relations and communications as well as legal aspects." (4 mentions)
-"Conflict resolution (spousal, children, inlaws, partners)." (3 mentions)
-"On family communications (a) about both farm/family matters." (2 mentions) "(b) Communications skills with inlaws."(2 mentions)
-"On inter-generation family enterprises, communications, roles and expectations of farm family members." (2 mentions)

-"On family communications, especially father/son partnerships, to increase effectiveness (in particular when son/daughter marries...potential conflict situation) and during stressful times."

-"On psychology of risk investment (father very cautious --does figuring in his head while son wants to take chances, expand)..." (2 mentions)

(iii) Time Management

-"On time management/organization (a) making use of time savers" (3 mentions) "(b) managing time for recreation, hobby, vacation." (3 mentions)

(iv) Goal Setting/Decision-Making

-"Goal setting skills for both short- and long-term, decision-making skills."

(v) Home Management

-"On nutrition education for humans."
-"On money management in the home so all family members benefit."

(vi) Other

-"On counselling resources for family problems, on assertiveness training for farm women and building image/self-esteem."
-"On consulting services, to provide reliable information on services/facilities available in a local area."
-"On hobbies for men which could include: car restoration, carpentry, leatherwork, pottery, etc."
-"On making social connections/friendships. Too much loneliness, isolation."
-"On child rearing."
-"On gardening, best varieties suited for locale and how best to grow."

(b) MATFP Attendees Age 35 or Less

(i) Human Relations

-"Human relations management--family/partners." (4 mentions)
-"Changing role of farm/family members."

(ii) Goal Setting/Decision-Making

-"Planning, joint goal setting, decision making." (2 mentions)

(iii) Stress Management

-"Recognizing and coping with stress."

(c) Farm Families Age 35-44

(i)Effective Communications (Family/Spousal/Partnerships)

-"On communications skills--how to communicate effectively. Family relationships/interpersonal relations--anything that helps my family understand me and my needs and vice versa." (11 mentions)

-"On family commmunications, about both farm and family matters." (3 mentions)

-"Personal growth; cycles of the family...how they coincide/conflict; realistic expectations of young and old."

(ii) Stress Management

-"On practical, not theoretical, information on stress management, recognizing and coping with stress; how to deal with busy seasonal times."(5 mentions)

(iii)Goal Setting/Decision-Making

-"On goal setting skills (short- and long-term) and decision making skills. " (3 mentions)

(iv) Home Management

-"Money management in the home so all family members benefit." (2 mentions)

d) MATFP Attendees Age 35-44

(i) Effective Communications (Family/Spousal/Partnerships)

-"On family/employee commmunications, human relations." (2 mentions)

-"Information on inter-generation farms--the human side of things--how to make them work."

-"Coping with teenagers."

(ii) Goal Setting/Decision-Making

-"Information on setting family/farm goals and how to plan."

(e) Farm Families Age 45-54

(i) Effective Communications (Family/Spousal/Partnerships)

-"On how to communicate effectively. Family relationships --interpersonal relations." (6 mentions)

-"On personal growth, cycles of a family... how they coincide/conflict; realistic expectations of young and old."

-"On partnership information/communications--how to make partnerships work to avoid misunderstandings; practical handling of daily issues--not legal jargon. Pros/cons on types of partnerships."

(ii) Time Management

-"On time management, organization, making use of time savers." (5 mentions)

-"On managing time for recreation, hobbies, vacations."

(iii) Stress Management

-"On practical, not theoretical, information on management of stress--recognizing and coping with stress; how to deal with busy seasonal times." (4 mentions)

(iv) Other

-"How to deal with loneliness, isolation; information for making social connections/friendships."

(f) MATFP Attendees Age 45 -54

(i) Human Relations

-"Management of human relations vis-a-vis family/partners." (6 mentions)

(ii) Stress Management

-"Practical information on recognizing and coping with stress...practical "how-tos", not ivory tower." (4 mentions)

(iii) Goal Setting/Decision-Making

-"On information about setting farm/family goals." (2 mentions)

-"On retirement strategies."

(g) Farm Families 55 and Over

(i) Effective Communications (Family/Spousal/Partnerships)

-"How to communicate effectively with family/inlaws/partners. Family realtionships/personal relations." (3 mentions)

-"How to make partnerships work to avoid misunderstandings; practical handling of daily issues, not legal jargon."

-"On conflict resolution (spousal, children, inlaws, partners)."

-"On family communications dealing with both farm and family matters."

-"On inter-generational family enterprises, roles and expectations of farm family members."

(ii) Stress Management

-"Practical information on coping with stress, "how-to", etc, how to deal with busy seasonal times." (2 mentions)

(iii) Time Management

-"On time organization, by making use of time savers, and how to plan for recreation, hobbies, vacations." (2 mentions)

(iv) Other

-"On assertiveness training for farm women and building image/self-esteem; they are more than just "go-fors".

(h) MATFP Attendees Age 55 and Over

(i) Partnership Information

-"Retirement strategy/estate planning." (2 mentions)
-"How to start father/son farm partnerships--making them work...the human side of things."

(i) Resource Group

(i) Effective Communications (Family/Spousal/Partnerships)

-"On communications skills vital to motivate/recognize workers/staff and obtain meaningful feedback." (5 mentions)
-"On effective partnership communications--almost invariably partnerships break up because of family differences." (4 mentions)
-"On operations guidelines for beginning farmers in partnerships with parents." (3 mentions)
-"On how to achieve good farm family communications... weekly meetings, separating domestic differences from business." (3 mentions)
-"On how to deal with family breakdown in communications."
-"On courses in business communications...money conflicts key issue to farm family problems. Money/value/goals relative to money creates dissension in family as well as interfamily partnerships."

(ii) Goal Setting/Decision Making

-"On joint goal setting skills and decision-making skills." (5 mentions)
-"On the fact that successful farm business units have both spouses involved in bookkeeping, record analysis and decision making." (3 mentions)
-"On importance of working towards common goals as a family/team."
-"On goal setting being critical:
-business and way of life
-short and long term
-profit and quality of life."

(iii) Stress Management

-"Practical "how-tos" dealing with stress on a day-to-day basis." (4 mentions) "including time management (3 mentions)

(iv) Home Management

- "On guidelines for assessing cost of living realistically; the need to separate business income and expenses from personal expenses; the need to establish two bank accounts." (3 mentions)
- "On the need for farmers to gain management experience/skills and take into account home living costs to maintain viability of unit...living costs should be consciously taken into account and not left just to happen (if not, it generally leads to financial trouble." (3 mentions)
- "On information/courses on home budgeting." (3 mentions)
- "On making farm business units aware of the importance of good home management/budgeting."

(v) Role of Farm Women

- "On the need for awareness that farm wives carry the biggest burden in troubled farm families."
- "On information/courses to increase awareness of farm women's importance and role."
- "On recognizing that farm women's responsibilities keep increasing but receive no help nor recognition."

(vi) Other

- "On awareness training to recognize warning signals re: alcohol/drug abuse, child/spouse battering, etc."
- "On awareness of resources/services prepared to handle human/people issues."

APPENDIX H

RESPONSES GIVEN BY THE RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS TO THE QUESTION "DO YOU PERSONALLY KNOW OF ALCOHOL ABUSE, DRUG ABUSE, CHILD ABUSE, FAMILY VIOLENCE OCCURRING AMONG FARM FAMILIES?"

-"family violence through anger, frustration; do not know how to vent; difficult to help since farmers are so independent, private"
-"need mental health services--someone you can talk to--important to maintain a closed mouth"
-"some alcohol abuse with farm families; no visible evidence of family suffering"
-"incest yes; alcohol abuse (2 families), divorced"
-"one family in particular--wife battering during alcohol abuse"
-"many family breakdowns/divorces of 30 year marriages"
-"no, except for one incidence of alcohol abuse"
-We have seen evidence of alcohol abuse. I think we are seeing evidence of depression. I know a farm lady that is a very depressed young lady. We don't see any evidence of child abuse but I have seen evidence in this neighborhood of a family that has a child and I don't know if you would call it neglect or just social deprevation. I think there could be some outside help"
-"alcohol abuse destroyed the family--he is now on his own because everybody has pulled out and left"
-"there was violence in another family"
-"alcohol abuse more than believed"
-"women/men use tranquilizers"
-"no hard drug abuse; some pot"
-"has seen some wife battering"
-"psychological abuse more evident--wife servile role, man dominates and spouse programmed to fill that role"
-"evidence of drug/alcohol abuse all over the place"
-"alcohol abuse--worse as you go north (of here)"
-"some child abuse--physical, some neglect"
-"know of one child alone at night (9 years old)"
-"personal knowledge of a bitter separation/marital breakdown"
-"suicide--one farmer but not aware what triggered; otherwise no other personal violence"
-"has seen alcohol abuse only in a few instances"
-"child neglect more prevalent than admitted"
-"personally knows of children battered"
-"knows of farmers abusing alcohol; abuse costly--takes away from management of farm enterprise"
-"not aware though knew of one family a few years ago where wife battered"
-"very aware of some situations"

APPENDIX I

THE FAMILY IN BUSINESS: A SYNOPSIS

The Family in Business: Understanding and Dealing With the Challenges Entrepreneurial Families Face . Paul C. Rosenblatt, Leni de Mik, Roxanne M. Anderson, and Patricia A. Johnson. (San Fransisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers 1985)

Based on in-depth interviews with families involved in business, they explain the common difficulties that arise over decision-making authority, questions of fairness, taking business problems home, planning for succession and inheritance, having too much or too little time together, dealing with non-relative employees, and other areas of tension. They look at the special problems faced by women (who may be expected to shoulder both business burdens and family duties) and show how common family problems (such as sibling rivalry) can be worsened by business considerations.

For consultants and therapists who work with families in business, this book provides advice on ways of overcoming problems stemming from confusion over roles, power struggles, conflict between family members and non-relative employees, and other sources. The authors focus on interpersonal and psychological problems faced by business families, and offer advice on gaining rapport with family members, understanding them, overcoming resistance to change, and helping them develop problem solving skills. And they offer guidelines on ways to improve management in such areas as compensation, supervision, conflict resolution, and organizational structure.

Members of family businesses (and professionals who work with families in business) face special problems and challenges because roles and needs in the family and business settings so frequently overlap and conflict. Decisions about how things should be done, compensation issues, and lines of authority carry special complications in family businesses.